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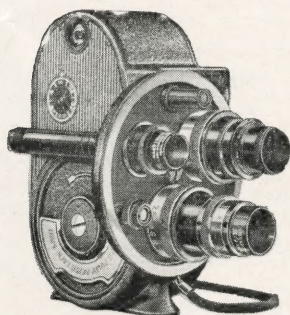


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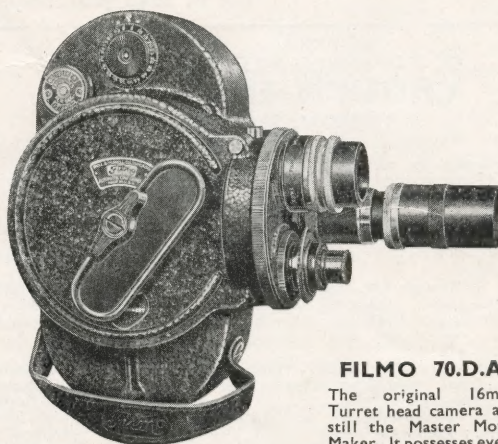
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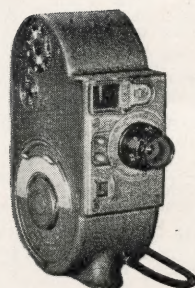
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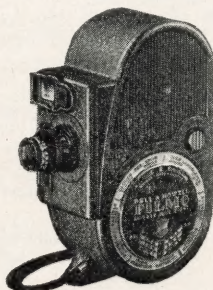
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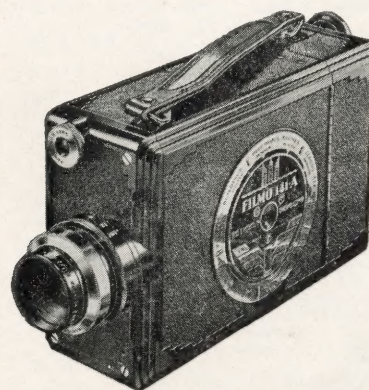


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The Amateur Film of the Future

In response to many requests from those readers who were unable to attend the London performances of the "Ten Best," we publish below the major part of Mr. Andrew Buchanan's address to the audience.

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Gordon S. Malthouse
Editor

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THERE is a significance in the work of the amateur of which he may not always be conscious.

Professionals have come to regard the amateur film movement in the nature of an experimental laboratory from which there emerges, from time to time, examples of technique which advance film-making very considerably.

I do not think I need excuse myself for repeating an axiom which I have often expressed, both in writing and verbally—that the amateur's most precious possession is his freedom, and that few, if any, professionals can ever hope to secure it, because they spend their lives catering for the demands of a commercial market. This freedom is invaluable, for it enables an amateur to experiment, and change his efforts until he reaches what he regards as perfection, without having to bother about release dates and commercial values. Only by people so free to experiment is technique advanced.

But it is one thing to say: "Freedom is a priceless possession," and another to advise how best to employ it in these difficult times, when few of us are as free as we used to be.

Many amateurs will probably consider that they should capture impressions of the country at war—what 1939 looked like, and all that kind of thing—concentrating upon close-ups of sand-bags and what not.

Leave it to Professionals

I say: No, leave that to professionals who have to do it day after day. Regard the war, however enormous it seems at the moment, as temporary, and go down to fundamentals for material—to ageless, dateless, timeless things—to show how they persist despite recurring crises. Deal with the seasons, the arts, science, medicine, agriculture, and so on, whether in magazine form or in any other way, but the shape should possess a value which will be as vital next year as last year.

Unfortunately, to-day, travel in countries abroad is not possible, for one of the highest qualities of film is its ability to serve as an ambassador; I have always been conscious of the great value of films made by amateurs on their travels showing peoples of other lands. When interchanged these films do a great service to world peace. Nevertheless, thoughts, to-day, will turn instead to planning holidays in this country, and the briefest

piece of advice I can give is to design films of these vacations so that they will appeal to strangers. That is, plan for public instead of merely domestic appeal.

The next piece of advice I would like to give is *never copy professionals*. Merely because, say, a news-reel is a certain size and shape, and very familiar—some think too familiar—or a magazine film consists of, say, five contrasting sequences, or a documentary film is a documentary film—whatever that is!—or because a feature is five or six reels in length and begins at the beginning and ends at the end, is no reason why they should always do so. There is no rule about what shape a film must take if it is not catering for a conventional market.

Subject Before Shape

The major point is, your *subject-matter* should always dominate the shape of your film, and the shape should never confine the *subject-matter*. If a subject demands five reels, don't force it into four hundred feet. A first-hand example is provided by some single 1,000 feet reels I made a few months ago. They could not exceed that length, and one subject we chose, rather out of devilment, I'm afraid, was the evolution of medical progress from primitive times until to-day.

Now 1,000 feet runs just over eleven minutes, and we began in the time of cave-men, passed through Ancient Egypt, Greece, Rome, Norman England, France, Germany; covered the invention of the stethoscope, paid tribute to Madame Curie, Pasteur, Barts Hospital, Mount Vernon Hospital, tropical diseases and modern operation theatres. But we *knew* the task was impossible and that is the excuse. If we had not known, and had sacrificed such a marvellous subject merely because of a footage demanded by the market, we should have been fools. Instead, we gave a mere impressionistic survey—a prologue to a possible long film, the ultimate length of which would be governed entirely by subject-matter.

Thus, I repeat, subject comes before shape, and possibly the shape of films to come—amateur films, no doubt, because producers have had the time to experiment—will reveal the film of the future, which, as I have often said, will not be dependent upon dialogue. Actually, the basic silent film technique is the only right approach,

(Continued on page 86)

IMPORTANT :—Under the new paper restrictions we are only allowed one-third of our pre-war paper supply. Consequently, in order to save paper, it is essential that we do not print more copies of AMATEUR CINE WORLD than are really necessary. In future, copies of AMATEUR CINE WORLD can only be obtained by placing a definite order with your local newsagent or photographic dealer. There will be no copies for "chance sales" and consequently if you do not place an order, it is extremely unlikely that you will be able to obtain a copy. Alternatively, subscriptions can be placed direct with us and details of the subscription rates will be found on this page. May we also remind readers that a 2½d. stamped addressed envelope must be enclosed with all letters requiring a reply.

Andrew Buchanan

on WRITING FILM STORIES

I HAVE sometimes seen amateur films based on good stories and ideas which have entirely missed the mark because too little attention has been paid to accuracy of detail and continuity. Conversely, I have noticed, as you must have done, poor or improbable stories on the professional screen which have been highly entertaining and popular because they have been made with efficiency and polish.

Now, although I am confining these remarks to the actual *writing* of film stories, I would remind you that as all the processes in film-making are closely interrelated, the film-story writer needs to bear in mind that the finest scripts can be ruined by inefficient or careless production. Whereas a novel is the ultimate expression of its author's idea, the film-story only supplies the written instructions which the camera has to translate into moving images.

"That's a good idea!" is often the prelude to the writing of a neat, ingenious script which, on paper, is excellent, but which is no guarantee that the final production will be as good to look upon as the script was to read. As, however, the amateur film-story writer is frequently the producer too, he has only himself to blame, or praise, for the ultimate result.

Study professional films, and you will find they are built upon a central theme which is carried to a logical conclusion via a series of *linked* situations, each of which

exerts its own dramatic or comedy appeal. You will also notice that branching out from the main theme are subsidiary situations, which give the impression of occurring *simultaneously* with the central action that is driving the basic story forward. These secondary events help to keep interest alive, lend variety to the narrative and introduce contrasting characters and scenes to strengthen the background of the chief players.

Thus, a main plot concerning the activities of, say, a gang of jewel thieves may be supplemented by a romance between one of its members and the daughter of the detective who is tracking down the gang. One group of situations helps the other, but both groups appear to the audience as one.

Five Rules

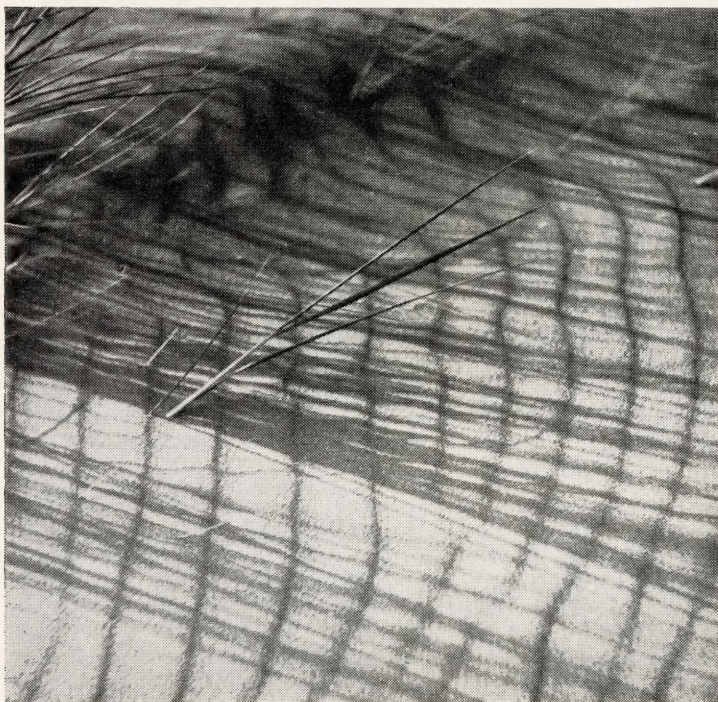
The same amount of care is needed to construct the simpler form of film-story based on a single situation, as for the ambitious multi-headed feature plot, both being approached by observing the following five rules :

- (a) Begin in an arresting manner.
- (b) Establish every character clearly.
- (c) Do not reveal the plot too soon.
- (d) Plan the situations so that each shall *increase* in dramatic appeal. That is, try to rise steadily to a climax.
- (e) Avoid the anti-climax ; this reveals an undeveloped sense of dramatic values, which is frequently evident in the film which ends on a logical note and then continues to dither on and on, thereby ruining all the good work which went before it.

Now writing a film-story involves two distinct tasks ; first the treatment, in plain, non-technical language, and second the scenario, or shooting-script. There is no formula save that one thinks only in terms of moving images and does not depend upon explanatory titles or dialogue to narrate the story. Also one should seek to devise a plot against a background with which one is familiar—industrial, agricultural, floral, literary, domestic—so that realistic and informative touches can be introduced into the fictional plot.

It is the shadows which "make" this otherwise ordinary shot, conveying with economy of effect an impression of sunshine.

Let us now plan a "human" film-story, which we might call "Cross-Words." It centres round



P We are all agreed that thinking up a plot for a film is one of the most difficult of the problems of movie-making. Professional film plays we do not regard as a good model because they are invariably of an elaborate nature, yet, as Mr. Buchanan, well-known director who also writes the stories for most of his films, points out: "the same amount of care is needed to construct the simpler form of film-story based on a single situation, as for the ambitious multi-headed feature plot." Mr. Buchanan also gives an interesting plot, as an example, and carefully analyses it.

two working-class families, the Browns and the Frowns. Brown is a signalman; Frown is an idler. Brown is a decent fellow, keen on his immaculate garden, fond of his wife and proud of his daughter. Frown drinks away his dole money, is forever rowing with his wife, and bullies his son. His garden vividly mirrors his character—dirty, drab, neglected.

However, both men have one thing in common—solving cross-word puzzles. Once, Brown won a few shillings, but he solves them primarily for mental relaxation, being quite contented with his station in life. On the other hand, Frown lies in bed tackling the puzzles solely to win a big prize, so that he might idle and drink for the rest of his life in comfort.

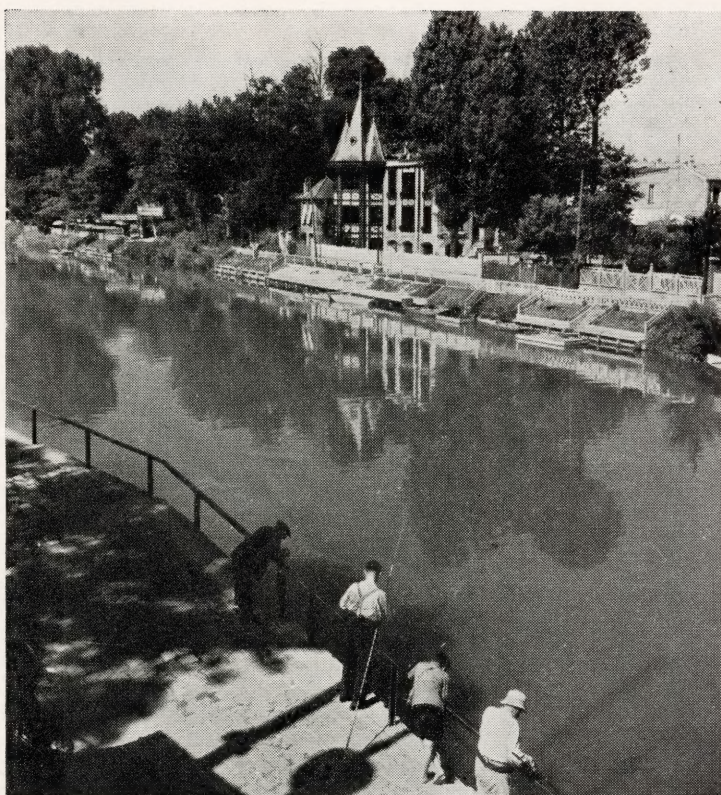
Frown Becomes Rich

One day Frown wins five thousand pounds! Brown rushes in to congratulate him, but is told to clear out! Poor Mrs. Frown regards it as a miracle. Now their son can be properly educated, the house can be painted from top to bottom, and she can buy some of the nice clothes she has always wanted. Then the rest of the money can be put away safely. Neighbours are envious. Fancy Frown, of all men, getting such a windfall! He doesn't deserve it. Perhaps it'll change him. Perhaps it won't. It didn't! He behaved shamefully. He bought *himself* a lot of new loud clothes. He gave champagne parties to all his disreputable friends. He purchased an enormous car. He stayed in bed until tea-time instead of rising around noon as hitherto. He did not give a penny to his family.

Soon the prize was reduced to the last thousand, most of which he carried about with him in notes. He drank more and more. Often Brown would watch him rolling along the road and would sadly shake his head.

One night when Frown took out his enormous car, he was about to enter it when another vehicle drew up behind. A man leaped out, and, with magical fingers, grabbed Frown's wallet containing the balance of his money and was back in his car and driving away before the fuddled brain of Frown had realised what had happened. Then he drove after the thief, his great car swaying from one side of the road to the other.

It was a mad race, round side streets, into main roads out beyond the suburb, over a bridge and then along a straight stretch. Ahead lay the railway line. Level crossing gates were open and the thief, well ahead, drove



A "pan" along a river could usefully terminate on a point in which there is foreground interest, as here. It is necessary to have some definite feature of interest on which to end.

right across. The gates closed. Then Frown's car came into view. Brown, in his signal-box, recognised it at once and knew something was wrong. He realised, too, that Frown would probably be

incapable of pulling up at the gates and would smash through them into the oncoming express. Should he let the waster drive to his doom? He thought of the relief Frown's wife and son would then experience, but quickly crushed the thought.

Tension

Making up his mind, he moved like lightning. Up went a signal. The express saw it and brakes were applied. Frown's car was very near the gates. Brown watched the terrible approach of both and then gasped with relief as he saw the express pulling up a few yards from the level crossing. Just then Frown's car crashed into the gates, which burst open. The big car did not turn over (as it certainly would have done if this was a professional film), but the impact threw Frown on to the lines. Brown rushed down, and carried him to the side. He then ran back to ring for an ambulance.

When Frown recovered consciousness and found his wife bending over him, he smiled at her—the first time for years. In a feeble voice he said he'd been dreaming he'd won a fortune. His wife explained he'd had a fall and that Brown had picked him up.

Brown was weeding his garden. Mrs. Frown went to the window and beckoned him up. The men met. There was quiet pity in Brown's eyes and a pleading look in Frown's expression.

(Continued on next page)



"Dreamt I'd—I'd had some good luck!"

"So you have—you're going to recover. That's good, isn't it!"

Frown smiled at these words, and then, looking at his wife again, he said, "Pity to waste life, ain't it? Pity. No—no more cross-words, eh!"

Be careful when taking shots against the light. A deep lens hood is essential.

That plot incorporates a variety of appeals, and demands good character work. Consider the separate linked situations:—

1. The contrasting households.
2. Brown at work in his signalbox. Frown idling.
3. Brown and Frown work on crossword puzzles.
4. Arrival of the winning cheque.
5. Neighbours' amazement.
6. Frown's family's hopes.
7. Hopes shattered. Frown's new clothes, parties, car.
8. The dwindling fortune.
9. The street robbery.
10. The car chase.
11. The crash—signal-box action.
12. The return of consciousness.
13. No more cross-words.

I have intentionally drawn up a plot which contains a high spot of drama *just before the end* to emphasise the anti-climax problem previously referred to, for the car crash is *not* the biggest moment in the story. An anti-climax should never be confused with a logical dramatic ending of quiet intensity, which may follow a thrilling situation. The biggest moment in that story is the transformation of Frown—the realisation, after suffering and being at death's door, of his faults. Badly handled, that scene could easily become an anti-climax

WRITING FILM STORIES

(Continued from previous page)

to the crash. Correctly presented, it balances and terminates the plot.

Such a skeleton treatment needs writing and rewriting until it flows smoothly and contains all essential details of action, though not in scenario form. Only when the story reaches perfection should one begin to work the action out in numbered shots.

In developing the treatment one should remember the five essential rules outlined earlier. For instance, the opening must be arresting, and it might well begin with Frown's boots dominating the screen, the camera gradually revealing the owner lying on his bed. Brown's boots next, and perhaps his hands, carefully tending his garden. Then, by intercutting, one can draw a vivid comparison between Brown's wife and daughter and Frown's wife and son. Having been introduced to the chief characters, we learn of their background, and so both houses can be studied from a well-chosen position in one or other of the little gardens. One house is clean, the other drab, with worn out curtains and broken windows.

Such details need to be lightly sketched into the treatment, thereby laying the ground for the final scenario.

Thus, the film-story is planned and developed on a basis of rigid continuity.

Care in Continuity

The scenario can be left to the author to develop in whichever form suits him best, providing it is not so constructed as to permit careless production. Every shot must dovetail into the next. If Frown enters his car wearing a bowler hat, he must not emerge from it in a check cap—even his intoxicated condition could not be made to excuse such careless continuity.

Remember again the novelist has completed his work when he has written the last word of the last chapter, but the film author has journeyed but a quarter of the way when he has completed his treatment, and only half-way when the scenario has been finished. After that begins the task of translating the written words into film, as accurately as is humanly and technically possible.

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Problems of Acoustics

WE are going to deal with acoustics in the generally accepted sense of the control of conditions under which sounds are propagated and listened to. It should first of all be realised that the average sub-standard sound-film is usually reproduced under very different acoustic conditions from those which appertain during the reproduction of professional 35mm. sound-film in theatres. The modern public cinema building is carefully designed as to its acoustic properties, and considerable experimental work takes place before the building is considered suitable for its purpose. The amateur shows his sound films under any conditions which may be convenient to him.

Sound, like light, is a vibration, but whereas light is a vibration in ether, sound is a vibration in air. This can be proved by the experiment of placing a loud sounding object, such as an electric bell, under a glass bell-jar and exhausting the air from the jar. Provided that the bell is not resting on material that is itself a good conductor of sound, it will be impossible to hear it when it is rung, even though the ear is placed close to the jar. As soon as the air is let in the bell again becomes audible. Both light waves and sound waves can be reflected from surfaces on which they impinge, but sound waves move much more slowly than light waves.

We have all had the experience at some time of seeing a workman in the distance using a hammer or axe, and hearing the 'plunk' of contact an appreciable time after

Since the outbreak of the War many more sub-standard sound-film projectors are being used—in camps, barracks, A.R.P. centres—and we feel that some practical notes on sound-film apparatus and sound-film presentation will be useful. This is the second article in the series, and describes how sound is distorted under certain conditions, and suggests methods of overcoming this difficulty.

seeing the impact. Both sight waves and sound waves reached us after the actual moment of impact, but the light waves travelled to us at a speed of 186,000 miles per second, whereas the sound only moved at a velocity of approximately 1,100 feet per second.

Twin Effect

It is this comparative sluggishness of movement which creates some of our acoustic problems. If a flash of light is emitted from a source we shall see the actual flash and the reflected light (which has reached us by an indirect path) at what, for all practical purposes, is the same moment for each. But if a note is struck in a large auditorium, so that some of the waves travel direct to our ears while others reach us by a longer route, travelling first to a reflecting surface and then back to our ears, we shall be conscious of the indirect wave as an echo of the first impression.

Even though the room may not be large enough for this twin effect to be observed clearly, the fact that we receive two slightly asynchronous impulses will cause apparent degradation of the sound. The effect will be aggravated when we are receiving a constant stream of impressions, as in the case of a sound-film record.

Not only can sound be reflected. It also resembles light in that it can be absorbed, and as some wavelengths of light are more freely absorbed than others under given conditions, so there is selective absorption of sound vibrations. This knowledge is made use of, in dealing with acoustical problems, by the choice of the materials with which premises intended for sound projection are built, or the interior surfaces are covered. Readers will probably be aware that considerable thought is given to this matter in radio stations and in sound-film studios, as well as in cinemas.

It is not suggested that the same degree of care can be exercised when setting up sub-standard projectors, not only because of the expense involved, but also because the portability of the sub-standard projector is a valuable asset, and anything which tended to limit this would not be desirable. It will be valuable, however, if the facts above mentioned are known to the operator when he is setting up for a show, and he also has some knowledge of the methods of control.

The sound technician has for



Note how interest is immediately centred on the child and his boat by the absence of any disturbing background.

some time been aware of these special problems which face the sub-standard sound projectionist, and steps are being taken to deal with certain aspects of them in preparing the actual sub-standard sound track. For example, Mr. S. Leever, in an interesting paper delivered recently to the British Kinematograph Society, mentioned the desirability of boosting the top range or higher frequency portion of the sub-standard sound track, as compared with the master record of the same subject on 35mm. The higher frequencies play an important part in establishing the intelligibility of speech, and by stressing this character of the sound record, some of the disadvantages of unfavourable projection conditions can be overcome.



In a short sequence on mowing, a shot such as this would be useful because it is mainly decorative, but too many of such shots would defeat their purpose for the centre of interest is not sufficiently clearly expressed.

No Elaborate Technique Required

We have gone at some length into this matter in order that the reader may have a clear idea of the problem involved. It does not mean, however, that it will be necessary for him to acquire an elaborate technique to overcome the above-mentioned disadvantages.

In the first place, the critical standards of most of his audiences will not be so highly developed as to make some loss of quality a generally serious matter. Sub-standard sound tracks have in the past been much worse than they are today, but in spite of that fact sub-standard sound has grown and prospered. On the other hand, there will always be a large number of workers who will wish to get the best out of the apparatus they purchase.

The main principles to bear in mind are that hard, smooth surfaces are the most efficient reflectors, while soft porous ones will absorb reflected sound. As a practical case, which came within our personal experience, a room in a factory was allotted for sub-standard sound projection. It was virtually a concrete box, with four metal-framed windows, the only relief being in the form of heating pipes which ran around the walls at floor and ceiling height. Normal speech, let alone sound projection, was almost an impossibility, by reason of the violent echo. The four walls and ceiling were covered with Celotex carried on wooden studding, the floor covered with lino. Soft curtains were hung in the window embrasures. Echo was at once eliminated, and in fact the result was too dead until the ceiling was uncovered again. Celotex is a pressed board of fibrous material of loose texture.

In the average drawing room the presence of furniture, hangings and carpet will generally be sufficient to control echo. Trouble may, however, be encountered if the

room is very large, or if there are large bare spaces in it. The greatest difficulty will be found in schools and large halls and here some improvement may be effected by hanging drapes in front of the wall at the opposite end of the hall to that where the loud speaker is placed.

It should be borne in mind that the audience itself is a good sound absorber, and this should be taken into consideration when making preliminary arrangements. The inexperienced operator should make a practice of observing the difference in effect obtained both before and after the audience has entered the hall. This will give him valuable experience for later shows.

A trouble which may be experienced in private houses is sympathetic vibration of some object in the room. Such objects as vases have a natural frequency to which they will readily respond, giving a loud buzz or hum when a particular note is played. This can be extremely irritating to an audience. We have a short length of test film which we know will nearly always cause such an object to be detected. We run it at great volume before a show and then either adjust or remove the offending object.

Another form of vibration which we have often encountered in shows given by other people—silent as well as sound shows incidentally—is the aggravation of the noise of the projector by the stand upon which it is used. A small table or a dinner wagon used as a projection stand will act as a resonator, and the clicking of the mechanism and the whirr of the motor is turned into a deep roar which is particularly distressing when sound is being projected. This can generally be overcome by supporting the projector on a non-sound-conducting material. Typical materials are cork, felt or sponge rubber. It will be seen that all these things are porous in character and do not tend to pick up vibrations transmitted to them by the mechanical operation of the projector.

(Continued on page 90)

Π This is the third article in the series on trick work. All these tricks can be done with a normal camera and simple home-made apparatus. Actually the author uses a Dekko, but 16mm. camera-men can easily produce the same effects.

Some Novel

A GREAT deal of trick photography is accomplished by the combination of two or more exposures made on the same length of film. This calls for the use of masks and an "effects box." The Stage described in the previous article provides us with an effects box and a simple means of cutting accurate masks for use with it.

The glass plate which slips into the holder in Stage B is converted into a "screen" by dividing the edges into an equal number of parts, and inscribing lines on the surface with a glass cutter to form a mesh as shown in Fig. 1.

We now require a mask cutting guide for Stage A. A frame cut from sheet brass is made, the overall dimensions being the same as those of the correspondence cards so that it will be a neat fit in the mask holder in Stage A. The rectangular opening in the frame must be cut in such a way that when in place the sides and the outside lines in the glass screen will be in line with the camera lens.

Probably the best way to determine the exact dimensions and position of the opening is by stretching four threads between each corner of the glass screen and the "sight" set in place at the end of the hood, Stage A. This should be clear from Fig. 1. The sides of the frame are then divided into the same number of parts as the glass screen.

Thus it will be clear that any two corresponding lines, squares or points on the screen and on the frame will be optically in line with the "sight" or camera lens, as the case may be.

The making of a typical mask is shown in Fig. 2. The Stage is set up in the required position and the object to be photographed inspected through the sight with the glass screen in place. In the example given, the view will be similar to that shown in Fig. 2 and it is noted that the required masking of the window coincides with the lines X-X. We next take the cutting guide, place it exactly over a correspondence card and with the aid of a steel rule and a safety razor blade cut the card to the corresponding divisions

x-x. Two cards are cut in this manner to provide the "positive" and "negative" masks shown as A and B.

This is typical of the method employed to cut any shape of "high diffusion" masks for use on Stage A. Such masks are largely used where double exposure is made without change of camera position. Each exposure diffuses at the edges and no trace of the "join" can be seen. Other conditions, which will be described in later articles, call for masking to more clear cut limits. Such masks are made from cardboard to fit in the holder, Stage B, and the glass screen is used directly in this case as the cutting guide.

Quite apart from pure trick photography, we shall find that our Stage will give good service in titling our films. Straight titles may be taken in daylight by setting the title cards or lettering in position on Stage B, the complete apparatus being used in a vertical position with the camera pointing downwards.

With the movable stage placed over Stage C to cover the opening, titles may be set up on this stage and taken by artificial light, the illumination being supplied by the "Striplites" on the under side of Stage B. With four 60 watt lights of this type, sufficient illumination is obtained for correct exposure of Gevaert Ortho film at $f/1.9$ with the camera running at half speed.

Dissolves may be formed in the following way. Having run off a length of title, adjust the stop to give a long exposure, for example, 16 secs. Time exposures are then made on successive frames reducing the exposure by one second each time. The film is now wound back to the last full exposure (in this case 16 frames) and the next title set up. Exposure is now made on successive frames, commencing with 0 sec. and increasing by one second with each frame. Each frame will thus receive a total of 16 secs. exposure, producing a perfect dissolve. The balance of the second title is then run off to the required length.

If now, instead of having a stationary title set up on Stage C, we place the title on the movable stage, fixed up on pegs in the holes between Stage A and Stage B,

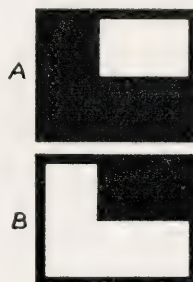
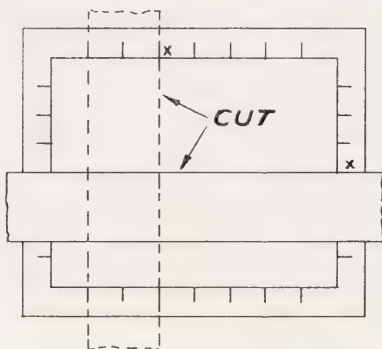
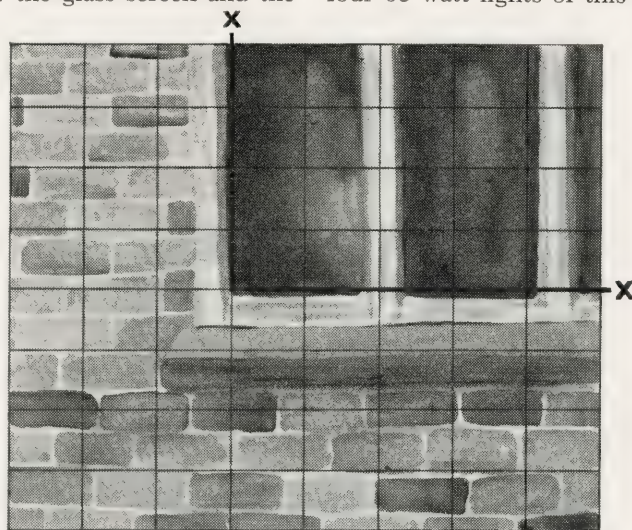


Fig. 2.

Trick Titles

By G. A. GAULD, B.Sc.

a variation may be introduced. In the first series of reducing exposures, after each successive exposure, move the stage one hole nearer to the camera. When the second title is introduced, place it on the stage near to the camera and with each successive increasing exposure, move the stage away from the camera. When the dissolve is completed, the movable stage should be back in its original position and the remainder of the title may be completed.

Not only will the titles dissolve, but they will advance and recede into each other, a slight variation which will be appreciated on the screen.

Another variety of title is shown in Fig. 3. In this case a white background with the letters "Crisis" cut in plywood is set up on Stage C. Only one "Striplite" is used so as to cast a shadow. The silhouette foreground with "1938" superimposed is placed on Stage B and faintly illuminated with a wander light. Time exposures are made. The illumination of Stage B is kept constant but the exposure on Stage C is varied, occasionally excessive exposure being given for a frame or two.

The result gives a flickering background with occasional flashes representing guns firing, shells bursting or anything else you like to make it.

As time exposures on single frames can readily be made, "Stop-Motion" can be utilised to make titles spell themselves out. This as a general rule has a tiresome effect but can occasionally be used to advantage. For example, in the title to the film of the son and heir, we can call attention to his age or the year in the following manner. The title "John David" comes on in the upper half of the picture, followed shortly by the words "Aged Three" spelling themselves out in the lower half. Mild cartoon effects can be introduced in the same way, where the title calls for it.

A simple and effective trick title can be made by setting up in the usual way on the loose or movable stage

Fig. 3.
A specimen of trick title work, made possible by the use of the stage described in this and last month's articles. Double exposure is used in this title, the wording being constantly lit, while the background lighting is intermittent to represent guns firing.



but place it upside down. (This is equivalent to holding the camera upside down for a "reverse" effect). After exposing a suitable length, tap the stage underneath so as to shake the letters all over the place. Reverse the film for projection, and a heap of letters will jump about, finally forming themselves into the title.

FILMING FOR AMATEURS

Filming for Amateurs, by Paul Burnford, A.R.P.S. (Pitman). 12s. 6d.

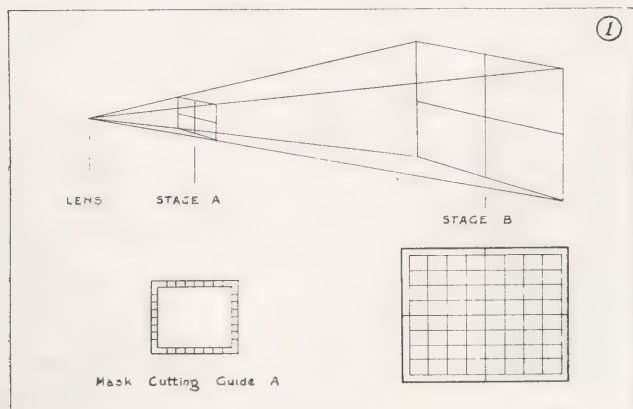
The name of Paul Burnford and the title of his outstanding amateur film "Moods of Nature" are familiar to all amateurs. Now he is a professional and, according to Paul Rotha, who writes the preface to his book, he has now passed that amateur stage when, although he won prizes with his films, he really had not much idea why he was doing things. Now he has learned to be a good director as well as a good cameraman. His book sets down for the benefit of others some of the fruits of his many experiences.

In his preface he states his purpose is 'to fill this gap (between very simple and very technical treatises) by combining theory with practice in a more moderate degree.' 'The book is not a complete treatise on filming, but an addition to what has been previously written.'

The author endeavours, all through the book, to show the interdependence between the technical and artistic sides of the subject. To enhance the value of his remarks in their comparative aspect all his data refer to one particular size of film, 16mm., and the apparatus connected therewith, and one make of filter, and panchromatic emulsions only.

The chapters, supported by illustrations, include consideration of General Photographic Principles, Creative Camera Work, Shooting Under Unfavourable Conditions, Interior Lighting and Experimental Filming. To many readers the most important section will be two chapters dealing with the Principles of Film Construction. One sentence, which comes early in these chapters, should be displayed in large letters in every amateur film maker's workroom. 'Cutting is not conceived on the cutting bench, but during scripting and shooting.' Having made this statement the author proceeds to show how the principle can be put into practice, and in doing so draws largely for his examples on films which are familiar to all serious filmgoers.

To those who have seen Mr. Burnford's work it is only necessary to say that he is as capable as an author as he is as a film maker.



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How I Made My PRIZE-WINNING FILM

In these short articles the remaining producers of films included in the "Ten Best of 1939" describe the methods they used to make them. A great deal of practical advice and help is contained in their articles which are particularly useful to other amateurs in view of the fact that these films were selected for their outstanding merit from many hundreds sent to us for review.

Photographs taken at actual performances of the "Ten Best" are reproduced in this issue. They are the work of the Federation of Cine Societies' official photographer, Mr. G. H. Wise, A.R.P.S.

"The Miracle"

1,200 ft. 16 mm.

ACE MOVIES toyed with the idea of "The Miracle" for several years before actually deciding to make it. The idea was fascinating but seemed rather ambitious—even for Ace Movies. I was perhaps fortunate in being the second director to undertake this film for the club because I was able to acquire a lot of useful information from the results of the first production, which had been abandoned after the shooting of the initial sequences.

The original idea was to make the picture a fantasy with an ethereal quality. A fine idea and one which would have made a lovely and satisfying job of work but, unfortunately, the director had not the material at his command with which to translate his ideas. The screening of the rushes made it obvious to one and all that the histrionic talent available within the club could not cope with the extremely difficult task the director had set.

The results of those rushes were disheartening and some doubted the wisdom of proceeding with the picture. So we went into a huddle. A considerable amount of money was already tied up in the production and we decided to reshuffle and deal again. This time I was to direct. I did a spot of hard thinking. It seemed to me that the only way I could get the story over with the limited facilities at my disposal would be to use the bare bones of the theme and handle them in a rather ponderous, or Germanic, manner.

The audience expectantly await the start of the "Ten Best" show.

To convey the allegorical, mystical and mythological aspect of the story I decided to try and rely on settings and situations rather than the acting ability of the artistes. It had already been decided that the period should be modern and the settings vaguely Tyrolean, so the only real problem as regards costumes was that of the Spielman's.

This character, of course, is purely allegorical and it was difficult to decide upon an appropriate costume that would fit in with the general treatment. A cloak seemed to be the most fitting outer garment, yet a black cloak might smack of melodrama or Sandeman's port, so the tweed Inverness cape that this character wears was eventually selected and seemed somehow to meet all

(Continued on next page)



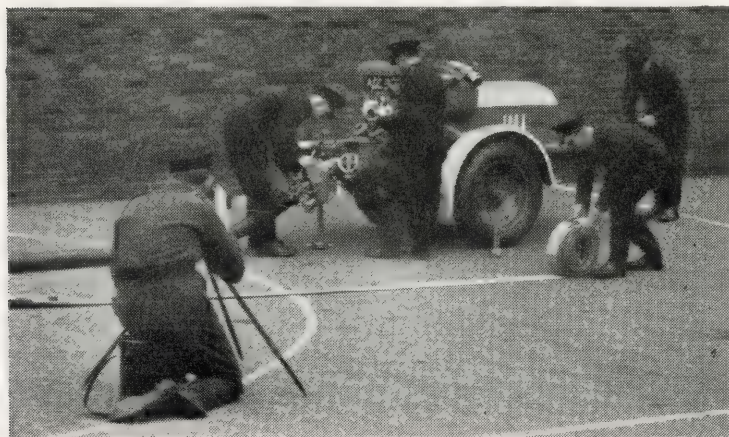
Ambitious Settings

(Continued from previous page)

requirements. The black glasses were to conceal the eyes, as I wanted this character to be absolutely emotionless and, good actor as Frank Biggs is, I felt sure his eyes would betray feelings.

To add to a sense of unreality in this character I decided that the Spielman should never be seen to walk, that he should just always be at the required place without anyone seeing how he got there.

Betty Warner played the Nun and she had no previous experience of film acting. To make the part as easy as possible for her I so prepared the treatment to eliminate as much as practicable anything calling for high emotional



The producer "shoots" an incident for inclusion in his A.F.S. film "8128."

capabilities. In the circumstances I think she did a pretty good job of work.

In addition to the Spielman, Frank Biggs played the hero and the Doctor. The Spielman and the Hero appear together several times so that double-exposure came into its own. The Gamekeeper was Hal Morey, who was also responsible for the production stills. His wife was played by Mrs. Cliff West. The picture of the Virgin Mary was portrayed by Joan Hale.

The settings were the most ambitious Ace Movies had ever attempted and a tremendous amount of preliminary research work and drawings were necessary to ensure correctness in detail. To obtain a sense of spaciousness we relied a lot on foreground miniatures and perspective. The studio floor-space was about 30' x 20' with just under 8' head-room, and as the club's lighting equipment consists of floor lamps, which occupy quite a considerable amount of floor-space, it will be realised that the space problem was quite an acute one. The settings were designed by and constructed under the direction of Maurice Fowler. He also arranged the lighting, so that a large amount of credit is due to Mr. Fowler, without whom I could have accomplished very little.

The camera used was a Kodak Special which had, in addition to the standard gadgets, many modifications

made by Jack Matthews, the cameraman. These included a three-lens turret with Dallmeyer and Cooke lenses, remote control and a special heavy tripod with panning head. A 15mm. lens was used almost exclusively on the interiors. Mr. Matthews' photography was splendid and all the more so when one considers that "The Miracle" was his first experience of shooting interiors under artificial light. Agfa Isopan stock was used exclusively.

The lighting equipment consisted of one 2 k.w., one 1½ k.w. and three 1 k.w. floods; two 1 k.w. spots; two banks of eight 100 watt lamps; several small effect lamps varying from 150 to 500 watts. The total mains loading available was 10 k.w. so we had to watch our steps and the main fuses. The latter probably only refrained from "blowing out" on us from sheer good nature.

From start to finish the film took about eighteen months to complete and cost approximately £75. That is about £45 more than a film the length of "The Miracle" usually costs Ace Movies to make.

In conclusion, I should like to say that any success "The Miracle" achieves has been made possible only through the whole-hearted co-operation I received from every member of the unit.

BEN CARLETON.

"8128" 3 reels. 16 mm.

THIS is my third attempt to land one of those coveted plaques, although in conjunction with Mr. Elliott, of Willesden, I shared the premier award in the "Week-End" competition, 9.5mm. section, some years back. After last year's fruitless effort, I decided to change from 9.5mm. to 16mm. My old 9.5mm. was part-exchanged for an Ensign Kinecam, which, although fitted with a turret, only housed an f/1.5 Cinar. This soon had a companion in the form of a Dallmeyer telephoto.

I was very pleased with my new outfit, it was easy to load and operate, moreover, it really looked like a movie camera, a fact which somehow inspired confidence when working among crowds, as I frequently had to. I built myself a very substantial tripod and a deep lens hood, with slides for masks and filters.

A Saga of the A.F.S.

Then came the problem . . . what to film? National Service solved the difficulty. I was an A.F.S. member of some months' standing, and had already observed the wealth of cinematic material around me, but better still, had made fast friends with a cine enthusiast, one S. W. Lowe, who is the trainee in the film. As Bill and I had considerable spare time, we decided to make a saga of the A.F.S.

I forthwith spent many evenings and early hours just planning. I prepared scripts of the numerous sections of the fire fighters' training, and when favourable week-ends loomed ahead, I prepared detailed shooting scripts. I say 'favourable' because fire stations are not

intended for filming and the station yard was surrounded on three sides by sheer brick walls 60 feet high.

All the shooting was carried out during the week-ends, save when the weather was ill-mannered, which was often the case. I hasten to add that no scripts were possible for the recruiting march, or the Hyde Park reviews. These are occasions when one has to rely on a quick eye and the nerve of a news-reel cameraman. I used Kodak Pan throughout, scorned all exposure meters, and only on few occasions was I able to make use of the tripod I had so laboriously made.

England at Ease

Week by week the film proceeded, although not entirely without difficulty. I had frequent setbacks due to my "extras" being absent for some unforeseen reason. Others were camera-conscious, some too sure, and a few not interested in my filmic adventure. The final shots were taken a fortnight before the outbreak of war. Here I suffered a severe set-back. I had concluded with some 200 ft. of National Service propaganda, à la Hitchcock. I endeavoured to show, in my small way, that National Service meant Security, giving us the opportunity of spending our leisure as we wished.

In short, I showed England at ease during the week-end—the great treks out of town—excursion trains and seaside coaches and lines of cars, all outward bound. I showed the beaches—Southend-on-Sea—ice cream and cockles—Kursal Park and Cosy Cafe, kiddies building sand castles, and somebody's Daddy lending a helping hand. I showed those who toil amid the complications of running a house during the week, at ease in deck chairs, and someone's sister Jean equally at ease in that snappy sun suit.

I filmed the hordes of cyclists en route for the open road, and the smiling girl behind the proud boy on that brand new tandem. And the hikers tramping over the hills, near my own village home in Kent, and again seated on the green outside the riverside inn enjoying a needed drink.

The first days of September found me scouting round getting shots (very discreetly) of a city preparing for the hate with which we had been threatened. G. EVES.



The children think it great fun to watch the results of their pranks.



Did the hen really lay this? Another enlargement from "Kids in Clover."

"Kids in Clover"

400 ft. 16 mm. KODACHROME

IT had been decided that a colour film should be made during our short summer holiday, having for a background either the seashore or a farm. A fortnight before holiday-time, no script had been prepared and the need to get something done had become urgent, so I settled down to think out any possibly amusing incidents which might happen on a farm, involving our two youngsters and their two elder cousins.

An evening's work produced a number of ideas, none of them founded on fact, and the next job was to arrange these in a reasonable order of happening. The script was then written up from this list, but as the location was not familiar, the action could not be accurately visualised. The result was a rather loose script which included several incidents which proved to be impracticable.

On holiday the weather was broken and shooting had to be done in very varied lighting conditions. Kodachrome seemed to cover up the variations in light, rather than accentuate them.

The farm animals were rather a problem. There were no pigs, and what is a farm picture without pigs? The turkey could not be incited to wrath and usually fled on the children's approach, and finally the fierce old bull declined to be obliging and trot in the right direction. A lot of patience and a 3 in. lens eventually secured the required shots of him.

Ants were somewhat scarce and most of an afternoon was spent in getting the foot or two of big close-ups. These were taken with a nine inch spectacle lens over one, two and three inch lenses, but the three inch shots were unsatisfactory owing to the difficulty of focus and sighting with such a degree of enlargement and no special finder.

The processed film looked very nice when first projected and was duly cut up and sorted out according to the script. Then the trouble really started! Whole incidents were missing, vital shots omitted and the

(Continued on next page)



Andrew Buchanan addresses the audience. The text of his remarks will be found on another page.

action just would not run. We were now a hundred and fifty miles from the original location so the help of neighbouring farmers was enlisted, and a further

fifty feet of film exposed.

We were fortunate in finding a byre, the door of which faced a whitewashed wall in full sunshine, a perfect reflector which made the interior shots easy. The other necessary animal shots, pigs, calves and hens, were also secured without much difficulty and our hopes of making a film out of the chaos began to rise.

Then another snag was struck. The last fifty feet of Kodachrome was the old yellow surfaced variety (unexposed), while the next was the later grey surface and there was a marked difference in colour rendering. Many hours were spent in cutting before the film was shown to the family critics, from whom it received a somewhat unexpected blessing.

The camera was a Paillard Hi16 and all exposures were by Smethurst High-Light meter. The grey surface Kodachrome was rated one stop faster than recommended and the yellow at normal speed. The turret front camera was a great convenience, often avoiding the necessity of a change of camera position, though with the exception, perhaps, of the shots inside the car, the picture could have been shot with a standard lens. There are no camera tricks, the effects being got by frequent change of angle and quick cutting.

FRANK MARSHALL.

"Black Vomit"

200 ft. 9.5 mm.

FIRST I would like to attempt to justify the title of my film, "Black Vomit," which has been adversely criticised by the judges. They felt that the pathological apprehensions of a sensitive audience might be unduly aroused. I would like to think that an audience of to-day might be so sensitive, but after the continual onslaught of gruesome news-reels, the tabloid press and certain forms of modern advertising, I feel that it should be immune from further shock.

As modern advertising does influence the public to

HOW THE "TEN

(Continued from previous page)

an amazing degree, a propaganda film must borrow its technique if its message is to make an impression. A title which disclosed the nature of the film would in this case have nullified its propaganda value, as the only person likely to be attracted by a film on smoke abatement would be a person already interested in smoke abatement.

One of the primary postulates of advertising is to arouse curiosity. This curiosity may bring apprehensions of a pleasant or of an unpleasant nature, but the curiosity still demands to be satisfied.

After much consideration there were two titles which described the film and yet would cause speculation in the mind of the audience. The first was: "There is a Coal Mine in the Sky," which is, I believe, the "theme song" of the smoky city of St. Louis. This, however, was decided to be altogether too lyrical and did not stimulate the feeling of disgust with smoke which was intended.

Perfect Description of Smoke

The commentary on the American documentary film, "The City," which was written by Mr. Louis Mumford, however, contained these words: "Black Vomit spreads across the land. Smoke makes prosperity, they tell you here, no matter if you choke on it." Here was just the title; a perfect description of smoke which aroused curiosity and yet which would make an audience wonder whether its sentimental regard for the open fire was not a dangerous delusion and a menace to the health and prosperity of the land.

"Black Vomit spreads across the land . . ." The words of the main title spread themselves across the map of England. Smoke from a cigarette was blown downwards on to this map. During a particularly large puff there is a lap-dissolve to the credit titles which were also placed on the map. There is a final puff of smoke, another lap-dissolve, and as the smoke clears away an aerial view of the smoky city is revealed. This was a still photograph placed in the titler.

The musical background was an important feature in the "Ten Best" presentation. Here are Miss V. Brittain (H.M.V.) and her assistant at the double-turntables.



BEST" WERE MADE

As the film was shot in a district almost completely free from smoke, the difficulty of getting the desired impression was considerable. Shots of the same chimneys from different angles were intercut with statistical diagrams, photographs of dirty children and the bad effects of smoke. Later, five of the worst of these effects were introduced by means of a child's sooty hand upon the fingers of which appeared in words the bad attributes of smoke, followed by five short sequences showing the consequences of these attributes.

Black was White!

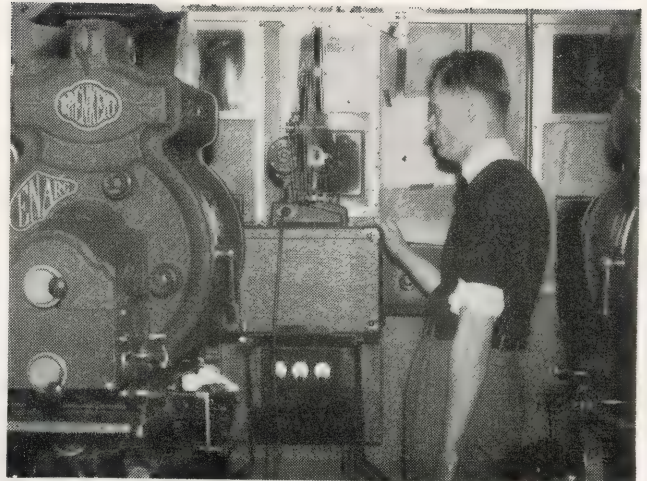
The hand was a still enlargement from one of the frames, with titling letters placed upon it. In contrast, later in the film a similar hand, only clean, is shown in order to introduce five of the useful products which are wasted in smoke. This shot caused a certain amount of trouble as the only titling letters available were white and did not show up against the clean white fingers. In the end a shot was taken of white letters upon a dirty hand again and the film developed as a negative, thus giving black letters on a clean white hand!

Many of the chimneys in the film actually smoke very little. The owners and employees of the several factories and works whose chimneys starred in the picture were extremely helpful when the situation was explained to them, and in two cases actually put material in their furnaces in order to produce as much smoke as possible during shooting. In only one case was there any opposition, but it was later discovered that in this instance the chimney had already proved itself to be a public nuisance and had been complained of many times.

The shooting of the pylons was not so easy. Although it took place some time before the declaration of war, it was quite obvious that I was regarded as a potential saboteur.

Throughout, the film suggests the evils to health and property inherent in smoke and the useful products wasted—medicines, soaps, plastics, paints and dyes, etc. There is now an advertising campaign to the same effect, only

Members of the audience inspect the original backgrounds for "Danse Macabre."



Mr. L. F. Hartje of the Federation of Cine Societies keeps a look-out for possible "breaks." To ensure ease of operation all the 16mm. films were mounted on one 1600 ft. reel.

the useful products saved are guns, explosives and the ingredients of chemical warfare. Civilisation progresses a lot in six months!

The camera was a standard Dekko. Lenses were Ross 1" f/1.9 and Dallmeyer 3" Popular Telephoto. Stock used was Selo Reversal with Ilford Alpha Gamma, Delta and Micro 5 filters. The Smethurst High-Light exposure method was used throughout.

D. SHAW ASHTON.

"Early Bird"

200ft. 16mm.

TIME after time it has been stressed in these pages that to be a success a film must be properly planned and a shooting-script prepared before any camera work is attempted. This advice would appear very straightforward and logical, but for the fact that the chief stumbling block occurs (as every amateur producer knows) before this necessary stage has been reached. I refer, of course, to the tedious search for a theme or plot. We all like to show originality in our film efforts and when we are blessed with a sudden brain-wave we are truly "on top of the world!"

A few years ago the idea for "Early Bird" came to me and I at once made haste to work out a story in "pictured action" which would come within the limits of a lone-worker's modest equipment.

A Quick-Action Story

It concerns the adventures of a man who, having overslept himself, dresses hurriedly and in his haste to get to his business, overlooks many details, gets hot and bothered as he can't find this and that, cuts himself while shaving, looks in vain for his stud till he finds that it is in his shirt collar all the time. At last, after an ill-made cup of tea, he dashes out of the house and after clambering over his front gate (which has jammed) speeds on his way to the station.

The train is signalled and our hero comes rushing along—reaches the paperstall—hands coin to newsboy in exchange for a paper and is politely told "It's tuppence on Sunday, sir!" Sadly, he retraces his way home,

(Continued on next page)

Good Advice from a "Ten Best" Prizewinner

(Continued from previous page)

creeps into his house and finding his wife is still asleep, goes downstairs, makes some tea and then innocently presents a cup to his wife, who has just awakened. Back in the kitchen we find him enjoying his tea, studying his newspaper and finally laughing at his own folly.

The action of the story called for about 90 per cent. indoor lighting and early last year, having purchased three Photo-floods, I decided to try them out. The stock used was Kodak ordinary panchromatic 16mm. reversal, which yielded quite favourable results particularly as the scene was supposed to take place in the cold light of an early morning.

The confined space available made the use of close-ups a necessity, which, however, is not a disadvantage on the sub-standard screen. Also, a wide-angle lens would have proved a useful accessory to the 1-inch Taylor-Hobson-Cooke fitted to the camera (a "Filmo" model 70E).

Most of the shooting was done at f/2.5, at which aperture care was taken to measure the camera distances. One little pitfall is worth recording—the opening shot should have been a fade-in to represent dawn slowly lighting-up the bedroom; but as the processing station was not warned, the shot was automatically compensated in the developing—with dire result! Apart from this, only a few retakes were found necessary. About 250 ft.

of film was exposed and this was edited down to less than 200 ft. I need hardly add that a rigid camera support was used for all the indoor shots. This consisted of a second-hand Theodolite tripod (purchased as junk for a few shillings) to which I had fitted a panning head.

In one scene the early riser is shaving, the camera showing his reflection in the mirror. He cuts himself and a time lapse is required while he repairs the damage, so, instead of wasting a lot of footage showing him searching for alum, etc., at the point where the razor slips, a close-up of his wife, still peacefully sleeping, is cut-in and the next shot shows our hero dabbing a piece of cotton-wool on his chin.

Editing a film is always fascinating to me and I must confess that I was quite pleased with the continuity evident at the early stages of cutting.

Here I should like to pay full tribute to the actor for his true appreciation and portrayal of the film character and to his excellent acting, particularly as this was his first cine experience. Lastly, I desire to thank *Amateur Cine World* for the repeated advice given in its columns, imploring the amateur to get into the habit of working from a carefully prepared script, the writing of which, in itself, can provide much enjoyment; the time thus spent is bound to be well repaid.

S. MARTIN.



Mrs. G. H. W. Randell formally opens the Bijou Cinema at Highgate, now used by the Finchley A.C.S., by cutting a length of film.

Musical Accompaniment to the "Ten Best"

We have received many requests for details of the records used by the Central Record Information Bureau (His Master's Voice, 363, Oxford Street, London, W.1.) for the accompaniment to the selection of the "Ten Best" shown at Film House recently. A complete list is given below.

WHAT A NIGHT

Portion of "Coq d'Or" (Rimsky Korsakov) C.3013, 4/-. "Policeman's Holiday" MR.3167, 1/6. Portion of "Mere l'Oye" (Ravel) DB.4899, 6/-. "Turkish Patrol" MR.3212, 1/6.

REFUGIO

Portion of "Symphony No. 2" Side 17 (Mahler), DB.2759, 6/-. "Spanish Dance No. 1" (Granados), C.1533, 4/-. "Aeroplane Effect Record" E.581, 4/-. "Sevillana" (Ferraris) B.8250, 3/-. "Cheering Crowd Effect Record" E.579, 4/-. "Spanish Dances No. 3 and 4" (Granados) DB.1363, 6/-. "Malaguena" (Lecuona), B.8823, 3/-. Portion of "Bimulla" (Halevy-Bird), E.11194, 4/-. "Spanish Dance No. 5" (Granados) C.1553, 4/-.
SUNDAY MORNING
"Palladium Memories—"Hometown" section," C.3067, 4/-. "Water Sugar and Candy"—Barrel Organ, F.337, 2/-. "Changing of the Guard," DX.768, 4/-. "Round the Marble Arch," BD.691, 2/-. "Angry Crowd Effects Record," E.579, 4/-. "Pomp and Circumstance No. 4" (Elgar), DB.1936, 6/-. "Harbour Noises Effects Record," YB.26, 4/-. Portion of "Old Father Thames," BD.691, 2/-. "Mayfair Valse," DX.737, 4/-. "Sunday in the Park," BD.5369, 2/-. "Four Quays Suite—Westwards section" (Coates), C.2666, 4/-.
THE MIRACLE
"Sea Pictures—A.D. 1620" (MacDowell), Col. DB.811, 4/-. "Church Bells" at the beginning of record, F.1052, 2/-. "The Creed" (Gretchaninoff), C.2206, 4/-. "The Hermit" (Schmalstich), C.2451, 4/-. "The Fire Bird—Berceuse" (Stravinsky), L.2282, 6/-. "Extase" (Widor), C.3094, 4/-. "Jacotte" D.19239, 3/-. "Romance De Amor,"

Brunswick, B.02866, 3/-. "Melodia De Arabal" R.2062, 3/-. "Legende" (Renie) (Harp), E.11232, 4/-. Portion of "Borghild's Dream" (From "Sigurd Jorsalfar") (Grieg), L.1748, 6/-. "Evening in the Mountains" (Grieg), B.9012, 3/-. "At the Cradec" (Grieg), B.9012, 3/-. "Andante Religioso" (Thome), B.8538, 3/-. "Elegaic Melodies Side 2" (Grieg), C.2935, 4/-. "Ave Marie" (Arcadelt), 4968, 3/-.
EARLY BIRD
"Snoring and Alarm Clock Effects" (record made privately). "Orient Express" (Col.), DB.1669, 3/-. "Chicken Reel," FB.1556, 2/-. "Turkey in the Straw" (Col.), DB.1821, 3/-. "A Nice Cup of Tea," BD.5179, 2/-.
EVERYBODY'S BIRDS
"Si oiseau j'etais, a toi je volerais," Bird Study (Henselt), E.11246, 4/-. "Quartet in E Flat—Canzonetta" (Mendelssohn) Op. 12, LX.407, 6/-. Quartet in C Major ("The Bird") Pat. 1 (Haydn), LX.538, 6/-. Quartet in C Major ("The Bird") Part 5 (Haydn), LX.540, 6/-.
THE AMATEUR FILM OF THE FUTURE (Continued from page 71)

and it is interesting to realise that the programme you are now going to see is unique insofar as it is silent. That is not a disadvantage. Indeed it can be a great advantage, because by being forced, through necessity, to produce silent films, amateurs are developing a technique which, when wedded to illustrative music and sound, approaches near to the ultimate film.

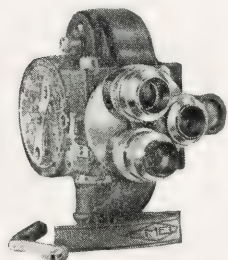
Two people seated on a divan, telling a story, symbolise the dialogue picture. But to tell that same story without any divan or people, but in terms only of moving images, demands a developed film sense, and silent production forces the amateur to tell his story vividly and simply without the aid of direct human speech.

The ingenuity of the synchronising of

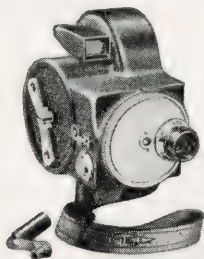
music by the Central Record Information Bureau of H.M.V. gives us a splendid idea of the possibilities of weaving sound, music and picture together, and, in the future, if freedom is not wasted by pandering to the conventional, film will return to its individual form as an international medium of expression because it no longer depends upon dialogue.

ANDREW BUCHANAN

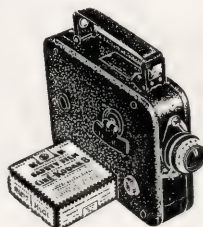
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16mm. B. & H. 129C, 750w., cost
£57 10 0
16mm. Kodascope A, 250w., cost
£11 0 0
16mm. B. & H., 200w., cost £80
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9.5mm. PROJECTORS

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9mm. CAMERAS

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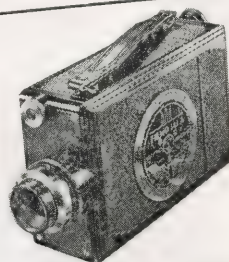
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Coronet, f/3.9 ... £1 19 6
Argus Turret, f/1.9, cost £36
£18 10 0

8mm. CAMERAS

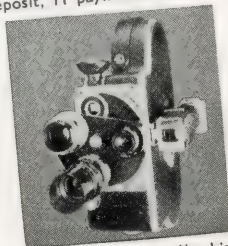
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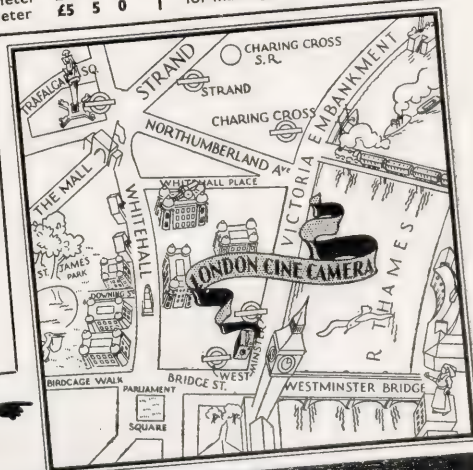
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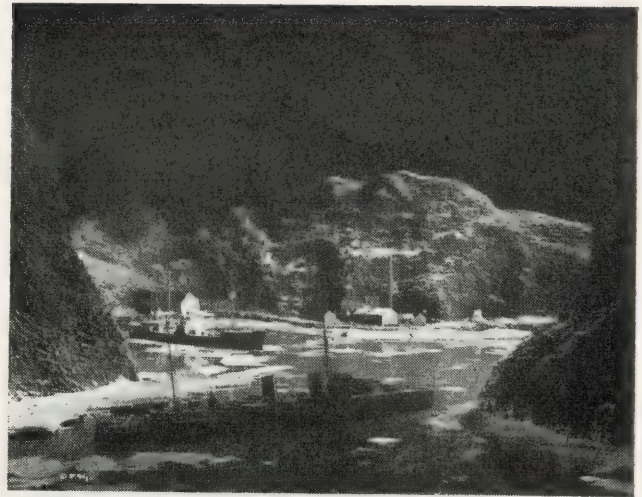
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Reconstructing the Graf Spee Battle

By H. Chevalier, A.R.P.S.



THE releases this month are not impressive, but I would like to describe some interesting points connected with the making of "For Freedom."

The sudden decision to release this last month and the "Silence," request of Gaumont-British-Gainsborough studios prevented me from disclosing the details earlier.

When I visited the studios to watch the start of the film they were re-constructing the boarding of Capt. P. G. G. Dove's ship, *Africa Shell*, by a lieutenant of the *Graf Spee* and a Gestapo officer. This scene vividly portrays the events that resulted in Dove being taken aboard the German warship.

Most Difficult Scene

The actual battle between the three British cruisers and the *Graf Spee*, the most difficult scene and one which might have spoilt the whole film, was to be filmed in a new manner, which consisted of building full-sized replicas of the interiors of the control bridges on the British and German ships, showing the activity during the battle, and inter-cutting accurate models of the ships placed on a large-scale map of the River Plate area. While the guns of the model ships were to fire, there was to be no attempt to suggest the action was anything but a re-construction of the battle. Interpolated commentary would build up a terrific climax with the reactions of the imprisoned captains and the tensed gun crews bringing out the realism of this actual drama.

The method of handling the small models illustrating the battle was truly remarkable. Never has there been a finer example of frame-by-frame photography, and the perfectly smooth movement of the tiny grey ships is wonderful. Here is a first-rate example for amateurs who are interested in this technique—even on close examination it is impossible to find a jerky movement anywhere in the sequence.

Later in the picture comes the boarding of the *Altmark* by the crew of *H.M.S. Cossack* in Josing Fjord. The first shots show the

The completed composite matte shot from "The Private Lives of Elizabeth and Essex."

British destroyer nosing its way through the ice-floes into the fjord, followed by a close-up of the boarding.

The first scene was obtained by using very accurate large scale models. A tank roughly 30 feet wide by 20 feet long and about 12 inches deep was erected and surrounded by plaster, 'snow'-covered cliffs. The ice floes are paraffin wax and even at close range on the set, they are remarkably realistic. Exactly how the destroyer obtained its motive power I am not permitted to divulge, but the method used was an extremely simple one.

For the *Altmark* boarding scene a special runway was built on one of the sound stages, large enough to accommodate a camera crew and the many members of the British naval boarding party. A full size replica of part of the side deck and superstructure of the "Hell Ship" were constructed on a travelling platform, lined up at an angle to the boat set. By slowly moving the travelling platform towards the set, a perfect illusion of the British destroyer coming alongside the German ship was obtained. During the scrimmage that followed, several cameramen armed with Newman-Sinclair spring-driven hand cameras obtained inter-cutting shots from various points of vantage on the set.

When the Capt. Dove cabin sequence was shot, I noticed a novel lighting arrangement to obtain the illusion of sunlight reflecting

on water. A small arc was mounted on one end of a 10 ft. long plank. On the

other end sufficient weights were fixed to act as a counter-balance, and the whole thing fixed across a heavy base in the manner of a see-saw. The light beam was directed on a small tank containing water, constantly agitated by a "prop" man, while the arc was slowly moved up and down.

This simple device perfectly suggested the rise and fall of a ship, particularly as synthetic sunlight coming through two portholes streamed across one corner of the set, emphasising movement by its angle.

New Type Matte Shots

It is possible that Warner-Bros. will generally release "The Private Lives of Elizabeth and Essex" (Bette Davis and Errol Flynn) this month, which is a particularly good colour film.

It contains several examples of a new type of matte shot now in general use, and was in fact the first production to adopt this modern use of the old glass painting method. Although amateurs know it is possible to make matte shots with sub-standard cameras, few have tried to combine a glass painting with an outdoor shot—the more the pity, as it is a fascinating business in colour filming.

The British locations in this film made it necessary to use some form of processed background, as the exterior sets of old London were built on an outdoor location with a view of Los Angeles as a background!

One of the best glass painting shots comes right at the beginning of the film. The scene opens with a group of people standing on a balcony, while through the open window can be seen the massive walls of old London town, crowded with people, and beyond the tall spire of St. Paul's.

For this impressive and highly realistic shot only the balcony and the lower half of the window were constructed, and mounted on a high wooden platform. The remainder is a special effects department matte shot.



Technical Features of the June Releases

(Continued from previous page)

One of the chief snags regarding colour matte shots is the precise matching of the colours in the "life-action" portion of the shot and the glass painting. Often, as in the present case, the glass shot may include continuations of the real set, and two pigments which give visually identical colour impressions frequently photograph differently.

This calls for very close co-operation between all the departments concerned. The matte painter must not only know exactly what colours are used on the set, but also what paints are used to produce those colours. Equally important is the colour of the light used in photographing the matte painting. As arc lighting is used on Technicolor sets, it follows that if the painting is photographed with inks it would have a strong red-orange hue and would be utterly different from the original set.

Should the amateur wish to try this new method in colour work, it is well to remember that any softness or decreased definition in the original negative shot will assist in blending the two parts of the matte.

In studio productions, the part to be covered by the painting is matted out by means of a piece of three-ply, blacked over, obtaining a soft, fuzzy edge around the matte by moving it slightly out of focus, and the scene is then taken.

Prior to removing the magazine, a small

test length is exposed and then printed, the glass painting being made from this test, without touching the remainder of the reel. To ensure accuracy in painting, an enlargement is made from several frames of the test length (to minimise the grain).

When the painting is finished the magazine is placed on the effects camera and the negative rewound to the start of the shot. With everything in accurate alignment the reel is exposed for a second time, giving the composite shot seen on the screen.

The illustrations show the actual balcony in the process of erection, and also the final composite shot which was enlarged from an actual frame of the film.

I would commend the excellent dramatic way in which colour is used in this film and it will be interesting to compare it with "Gone With The Wind"—which is said to be the greatest colour film yet made.



The view of the background behind the left-hand side of the set. To the right behind the crane can be seen the balcony and one half of the window and stone-work surround already in position for the matte shot. From "The Private Lives of Elizabeth and Essex."

PROBLEMS of ACOUSTICS

(Continued from page 77)

It is particularly important that the mechanical sound of the projector should be reduced to a minimum, for two reasons. The first of these is the obvious one that those members of the audience who are situated nearer to the projector than to the speaker will be distressed by the irritating noise. The second, more important but less obvious reason is that the projectionist himself will be adversely affected by this noise. It is to be remembered that the projectionist controls the sound volume from a panel situated at or near the projector. Also he is nearly always farther away from the speaker than any member of his audience.

Too Much Volume

Practical cinematographers will be aware of the inverse square law as applied to illumination, that is, that illumination varies inversely as the square of the distance between light source and subject. While the rule is by no means so simple in the case of sound, it may be considered that fairly parallel conditions exist, and that the volume of received sound drops off very rapidly indeed as the hearer recedes from the source, which is the loud speaker in the present case. The projectionist will always, therefore, tend to run his sound at too great a volume. If it is right for himself it will be too great for

nearly two-thirds of his audience. If, in addition, the projectionist is listening to his speaker through the noise of a nearby projector augmented by being stood upon a resonating base, he will tend to use sound volume which is almost insufferable to those in the front rows of his audience. This can be further aggravated by the position in which he places his speaker.

We will continue here with the question of silencing the machine itself.

Some materials are excellent conductors of sound. It is known, for example, that the sound of a bell will more readily be conducted down a steel rail than through a corresponding shaft of air. On the other hand materials of a loose texture conduct sound less well. This property is used by some manufacturers in preparing carrying and projection cases for their machines, and the would-be purchaser of sound equipment should bear this in mind when choosing an outfit. Not all enclosed cases are sound proof. A wooden case, merely covered externally with leatherette, might aggravate rather than ameliorate the trouble. But a similar case lined with suitable soundproof material, and which can be closed during the time of projection, will do much to solve the trouble.

Placing the Speaker

Most sub-standard projectionists place the speaker on the floor, beneath the screen, facing directly toward the audience. This is the least efficient method.

To understand the problem involved one should visualise the speaker as behaving

something like a photoflood light in a conical reflector, particularly as most of the speakers used for sub-standard work are fairly directional in character. If such a lamp were placed in this position the front rows of your audience would be bathed in a blaze of light, but the rest of the audience would receive only a small amount of light, and probably most of this would reach them by reflection, or by atmospheric scatter.

Something of the kind happens with your loudspeaker. The first few rows receive the majority of the sound output, the level drops off very rapidly after that, as the rows are in the sound shadow; the projectionist is particularly unfortunate, and the sound suffers distortion. Then, as we said earlier, the projectionist 'brings the sound up a bit' to suit himself and the poor unfortunates in the front rows are nearly swept off their feet by a tornado of cacophony.

If we were to take our photoflood lamp and place it above the top of the screen, three feet or so above the heads of the audience, training it so that it faced down the room, the light rays would reach directly a much larger proportion of the audience without overlighting those in front.

The same position should be adopted for your speaker, facing it down the room with the sound 'beam' nearly parallel to the floor. Do not direct it downwards towards the first rows. A convenient arrangement is to erect the speaker on the top of a pair of steps standing sideways to the audience, hanging the projector below it. The steps can easily be disguised. In this way a more even distribution of the sound at a more pleasing volume level is obtained.

Grotesque Lettering

By GEORGE NEILSON

IT is only on those rare occasions when circumstances really demand the use of a 'grotesque' letter form that they should be used. "And what" you may ask, "is meant by a 'grotesque' letter?" For the purposes of this article we may say that it is a letter of ordinary form altered or distorted usually so as to suggest by its shape the meaning of the word of which it is a part.

It must be made quite clear that no definite alphabets for these can be given, for the simple reason that a grotesque letter from one word may completely lose its character and meaning if it is used for another of different import. For instance, Fig. 1 shows severe, heavily faced letters used in a fashion which emphasises the meaning of the word OMINOUS. Suitable as the type is here, it would only be quite ordinary in a less threatening word. Again, Fig. 2 shows a distortion which adds sinister meaning to the word HORROR, but the same form might be used with equal effect for, shall we say, BROKEN or even COLD.

We are all familiar with the common letter form frequently used for such words as RUSTIC—logs of wood arranged to form the letters—but there are many others. Examples depicting snow at Xmas are common enough not to warrant illustration here. To take another subject: one thinks of TEA and realises at once, without saying so in so many words, that the fact that it came from China can be conveyed by writing the word in letters that remind our Western minds of Chinese characters as in Fig. 3. Again, the form in Fig. 4 may be used to supplement title wording when conditions of overpowering heat are to be conveyed. Even the jovial mood of a screen character can be inferred in the titles in some such form as Fig. 5.

And so we could go on; SPEED, depicted in an example in the first article in this series; lethargy, with the use of a heavy base, slightly back-sloped, letter; cold, with icicle-like letters and perhaps horizontal broken strokes in the background indicative of wind. Innumerable examples could be given and all manner of characteristics, both abstract and real, may be suggested or emphasised just as we please.

The Staggered Line

Finally, in this series, let us mention briefly the staggered line. Familiar to us all in advertisements and showcards, this most useful effect can be used for a multitude of purposes and the film title is certainly no exception! From the word it will be gathered that a phrase of staggered letters is one in which the individual components, words or letters, are off the line, either above it, below it, or out of square with one another.

Its function, of course, is to a line of print what that of the grotesque letter is to a word; that is to say, the staggered line reflects or represents the spirit or influence of a whole phrase. It can, indeed, go much further and be so formed as to convey a meaning far deeper than could otherwise be

read into the mere words, and can be applied with equal success to a single word or to a whole phrase or sentence.

As a typical example take Fig. 6, which says so very much more than an ordinary arrangement would lead one to understand. The inference in the staggered line regarding Johnny's uncomfortable condition is obvious! Not all examples are quite so delightful, but if care is taken in selecting the phrases or words to be illustrated, the touch of humour which is sometimes so necessary in a title, yet which is so difficult to get in a few ordinary words, can often be "put over" very deftly. For instance, a title saying "DASH! IT'S

SLIPPERY" would not normally be at all funny, but it at least seems less impossible in the form of Fig. 7. Fig. 8, in which only one word is treated, shows another use.

The method is not limited in use to the support of humour—though that is perhaps its natural application—for exclamations can often be made vastly more emphatic, as "WHOOPEE!" Fig. 9, reproduced from the first article shows. As a last example we cannot do better than give that most perfect illustration of the special purpose letter and staggered arrangement, Fig. 10. For ingenuity of conception and clever execution it is difficult to beat.

OMINOUS

FIG. 1.

TEA

FIG. 3.

HORROR

FIG. 2.

HOT

FIG. 4.

LAUGHTER

FIG. 5.

JOHNNY CANT

FIG. 6.

SIT DOWN

**dash! it's
slippery**

FIG. 7.

whoopee!

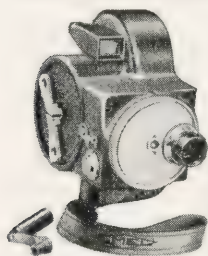
FIG. 9.

FIG. 8.

**YOU'VE SAT ON THE
BUTTER**

SPRATTS

FIG. 10



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By G. WAIN

One of the key drawings mentioned in the article. Note the registration holes which ensure that the figure is in alignment with the background.

Cartooning Made Easier

Many amateurs have hesitated to tackle a cartoon film because of the large number of drawings required. In his article, Mr. Wain suggests methods of lightening this task and of overcoming the difficulties of production.

The second and concluding article in this series will be published next month, when the timing of the action will be discussed.

IN attempting to make a short cartoon film, there are numerous difficulties which the amateur has to solve. Most of these can be overcome by the exercise of a little ingenuity and a large amount of patience, though it must be admitted that the job is by no means an easy one, and will entail many hours of arduous work.

Lacking nearly all the advantages of the professional cartoonist, not the least of which are a huge staff and unlimited financial resources, one can nevertheless learn much from a study of professional methods, and adapt many of them to suit one's own much more limited capabilities.

How Disney Works

Let us consider for a moment how Walt Disney works, forgetting the musical-accompaniment, and confining our attention to the all-important feature of any cartoon—that is, the drawing and animation of the figures. In Disney's training school about two hundred young artists are put through an intensive training course every year. These are the men who will sketch the in-between drawings of the characters when the key positions have been indicated by the master animator. Each one is a specialist in his own particular line. Some draw nothing but backgrounds; others, special effects; while the men who draw the figures of Mickey Mouse, Donald Duck and other characters, confine themselves to one of these figures only.

The action of each sequence is planned with the greatest care and down to the minutest detail, and the first drawings, or "roughs," are sketched in pencil on thin sheets of celluloid—only five-thousandths of an inch thick. The method is as follows. The rectangular sheets, all of exactly the same size, are registered in turn on two pins, and each successive drawing is traced from the previous one over an illuminated glass panel. The illusion of movement is of course obtained by advancing the position of the figures slightly each time.

These pencil roughs are then photographed in the correct order, and the resulting film projected. Improvements are then made, and the inking-in is not done until the action is as near perfect as possible. An average rate of progress is about three or four feet of action per day! The inking-in is done by a large staff of girls, and another large staff is employed in painting the colours on the backs of the drawings. Meanwhile the backgrounds have been made by other artists and the drawings are then prepared for filming.

One background sheet and three action sheets are photographed on each frame, for the separate figures each have a sheet of their own. If there are less than three figures, four transparent sheets are still used to maintain a standard light density, as the celluloid is not perfectly transparent.

The time taken to shoot an eight-minute "short" is about 100 hours!

No one can reasonably expect an amateur cartoon to have anything like the smoothness

and accuracy attained by these experts. That does not mean that the task of making one is hopeless. The problem is, how far can we go? Can we do anything to make the work easier?

Title Board for moving background: (a) Title Board. The field of view of the camera is represented by dotted lines. (b) Wooden grooves. (c) Registration pegs. (d) Elastic bands.



Are there any dodges we can use suggested by the methods of our professional brethren?

Well, in the choice of a "plot"—this should be of the very simplest kind, in which actions can be repeated *ad lib*. The moving figures should be of easily-drawn shapes, with plenty of solid black in them and no finely-drawn lines. Human figures should be avoided if possible. The thin celluloid sheets, so glibly mentioned in the descriptions of Walt Disney's methods, constitute rather a problem. Apart from the question of the expense involved in the purchase of hundreds of sheets of this material, some difficulty would probably be met in obtaining exactly the right kind. There is another method of animating cartoon figures, which is equally effective and much cheaper, though it is a little more limiting in scope.

Before describing it, it would be as well to analyse the different types of motion which can be portrayed on the screen. These are roughly as follows:

(a) A figure moving across the screen in front of a stationary background.

(b) A figure approaching, or moving away from, the camera.

(c) A figure performing the actions of walking, running, etc., but remaining in one part of the picture while the background itself moves.

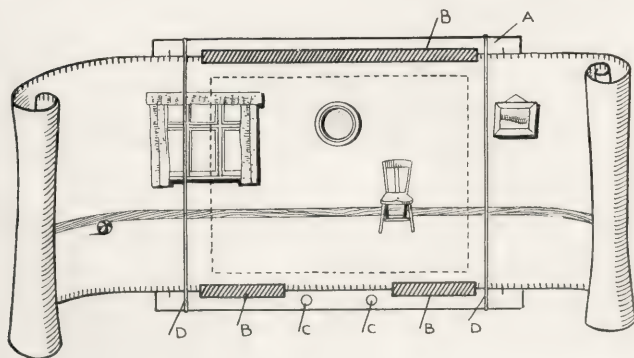
Of these, (a) is not to be recommended for general use where figures continue to move in one direction for any length of time, as they pass out of the frame in a few seconds. It is essential, however, for action which takes place in a limited space.

A Moving Background

The effect of an approaching or receding figure, type (b) is very difficult to obtain, as the figure increases or diminishes in size, and each separate drawing of it must be in the correct proportion. The difficulty can be solved to a certain extent by moving the camera nearer or further away from the drawing, but this introduces problems of focussing and centring.

A moving background, type (c), offers greater possibilities and entails less work, the reason being that the actions of the

(Continued on page 100)



LET'S TALK IT OVER

A LONE WORKER IN DEFENCE OF CLUBS

IS it fair, after only one visit to a cine club, to deliver a scathing commentary condemning not only the club visited, but, by implication, cine clubs in general?

"Lone Worker's" words would fittingly describe my own impressions of my first visit to a club some years ago. Uninvited and unexpected, I was received with such cordiality that almost disarmed criticism of the disappointing performance that followed. The films might have been made expressly to demonstrate what to avoid, and the projecting was casually incompetent.

I came away bewildered but with my illusions still fairly intact. I could not believe that such work might be representative of this old-established club whose activities I had admiringly followed in A.C.W. reports ever since that memorable day when I first saw a copy of your wholly excellent journal. (Resulting within three hours in the purchase of my first cine camera; and what a pretty packet you have cost me since!)

The films mostly emanated from other clubs but all were received with acclamation that seemed to me quite unfounded. Unlike "Lone Worker," however, I went again; I even trespassed on the hospitality of other clubs until at last I abandoned the illusions created by club propaganda and recognised the club for what it really is as distinct from what it pretends to be.

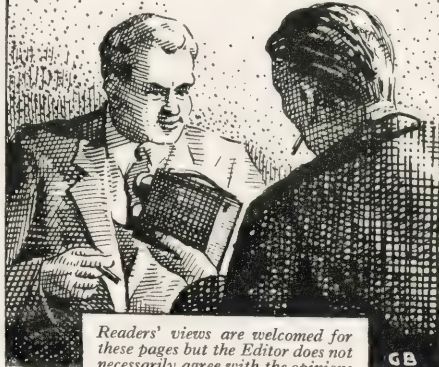
Taken individually, the club people seemed to be intelligent enough, and it was difficult at first to see why their collective efforts should be so utterly purile. The answer, when it dawned on me, was, surprisingly Box Office—or more precisely, the need for raising funds. Of course, I speak only of the clubs coming under my purview, but they seem to be typical of the majority.

These clubs, lacking financial endowment, extend their membership to all and sundry for the sake of securing subscriptions. Thus the few original serious workers soon find themselves outnumbered by subscription-paying dilettantes seeking only, or mainly, social novelty. After that it seems, all energies have to be devoted to devising and performing *Hollywood antics* for the edification of the uninspired majority that pays the piper and calls the lamentable tune.

Club Film Plays Valueless?

Let us admit it; the club film plays considered as entertainment are of practically negative value, but unquestionably the making of them gives enjoyment to all who take part. There are various ways of enjoying our grand hobby. If the lone worker, by preference or necessity, enjoys the bitter-sweet experience of personal creative endeavour, he has no right to castigate the club that has afforded him a taste of a different but equally enjoyable side of film-making.

I would like a "Society of Lone Workers" with membership open to holders of an A.C.W. leader awarded for personal workmanship. Its object would be the encouragement of individual film-making by the mutual



Readers' views are welcomed for these pages but the Editor does not necessarily agree with the opinions expressed.

exchange of qualified assistance and advice. There would be no attempt at collective film producing on the pattern of professional methods which, obviously, are designed on purely commercial standards to ensure a specific output of film-plays, and have nothing in common with the art and craft of the individual amateur.

I have been one of your constant readers for exactly five years. Does that entitle me to address you with this diatribe? For I have not yet succeeded in making a film that I would care to submit to your criticism. But I am on the turn and maybe the next five years will be productive of the coveted leader to qualify me for membership of my projected Society of Lone Workers. In the meantime I remain, in obscurity, New Eltham, S.E.9. "WORM-ON-THE-TURN."

CLUB FILM PRODUCTION

YOU have treated our film-making effort, "Secret Enemy," so handsomely and with such patience it seems almost uncharitable to bombard you with counter-criticism. We have had considerable pleasure from the pleasant humour of your comments, and though we are contentious on some points, we are keeping in mind much of what you have written for the value it will be in future work. We offer these further comments as they may be of interest and also to correct the impression, given to the reader whose letter you sent us and no doubt many others, that our plot was wilder and woollier than was actually the case.

We agree that the plot was wild (and at times woolly) for we originally planned the film, as it was our first big effort, to be a thriller and to show the full range of our production capabilities. We were in low water, we had to interest new members, we felt that movement and action were prime essentials; our lack of experience forbade subtlety; and so we gave them plenty of action and (heretical thought!) little art in producing "Secret Enemy." We set out to show our own district that amateur cine work did not consist only of disconnected family jottings and a day in the life of a dog.

We put our section on its feet and showed hundreds of people that such work had endless recreational possibilities for almost any

number of persons working together. In other words, the film has done its job; it struck hard and fast, as you have said; the novelty and excitement caught many people's imaginations and has roused enthusiasm for making a new, and we hope, much better film.

We feel bound, in considering your article, "The Plot Thickens," to point out that Britain avoided war in our film. This was made clear by a series of twenty specially prepared newspaper posters, backed up by shots of foreign troops, crowds, premier speaking, etc., and followed by a sub-title. We feel that the actual presence of war must have produced the sub-conscious impression that it existed in the plot owing to the resemblance of this part of our film to actual events.

Appreciation of Technique

Our next point is made on dangerous ground, we know. You, who live, we imagine, with films foremost, and the majority of amateur film workers have a broad and fairly high educational background. Such people like ourselves, with little encouragement, can become fascinated by film technique and its subtleties of movement and rhythm and suggestion, but most people who have not been fortunate enough to be educated beyond the age of 14, the so-called working class, are bored and puzzled by silent Russian and German films.

We know nothing of the reactions of Russian peasants but from personal experience in this district we know that the American talkie has stifled the working man and his family as far as these silent classic films are concerned.

Amateur filming can scarcely fail to be 'class conscious,' owing to its cost, but our club aims to alleviate this disability. We are aiming to improve the standard of appreciation but we have to start near the bottom. In other words, we must not frighten away useful and enthusiastic members by being too high-brow for their tastes. It is not only the audience but our future membership which is important. Possibly the most important thing of all is: Can we make a restrained, yet coherent film? Our next step is to find out.

Our letter has made a considerable detour from the original point, but we cannot close without saying how much two of us appreciated your showing of the 'Ten Best' at Film House. From the moment Mr. Buchanan started his introductory remarks to the final title of 'The Miracle,' the presentation was excellent. In our opinion the most outstanding films were "Sunday Afternoon," "Our Daily Bread" and "The Miracle." We await your analysis of the films with interest, but we must pay tribute to the makers of "The Miracle" by saying we thought it was a work of rare beauty; they deserve the highest praise and honour for such a great achievement.

A. F. SELLENS, J. K. FAWCETT, T. E. ADAMS.
Film Section, B. T. H. Recreation Club, Rugby.

HOME MADE TRANSFORMERS

I AM a fairly old reader of A.C.W., though this is the first time I have attempted to write to you. I cannot produce a film to pass my own criticisms yet, let alone submit one for your approval; however, I aspire to having one of the "Ten Best" one day. Still, if I am a rotten photographer, I am fairly conversant with matters mechanical and electrical, and indeed I get as much pleasure from contriving my own gadgets as in the actual taking of the pictures. So I would like to offer a little criticism on the article in a recent issue on the home-made transformer and to point out pitfalls which I know from experience have been made by home constructors.

To begin with the motor transformer, and its speed control switch:—The idea of the speed controller is all right, but the switch should be carefully chosen. On a normal type of stud switch, the arm passes over a circle of contact studs, and it is possible for the arm to lie partly on two studs at once, thus shorting a number of turns in the secondary. Now a transformer secondary, within limits, will try to supply the current demand of the circuit. With a "short" circuit the demand is obviously large, so that fairly heavy current will flow in the shorted coils. Moreover, the fuse in the secondary circuit offers no protection in this case, as the shorted portion is a circuit on its own.

The switch I have in mind for the job is one in which the contact arm is raised by insulating material as it passes from stud to stud. This gives a definite click over between each position, avoids the trouble mentioned above, and, also, is an advantage when

control is required in semi-darkness, in so much that a definite pre-determined speed is easily reached by feeling the clicks. For all I know the writer may have used a switch of the type I describe, but I think a switch of the *non-continuous* contact variety ought to be specified.

With regard to the lamp transformer, my only criticism is this:—The average domestic radio set uses well below 100 watts, and while I have successfully overloaded a re-wound transformer by taking 100 watts from it

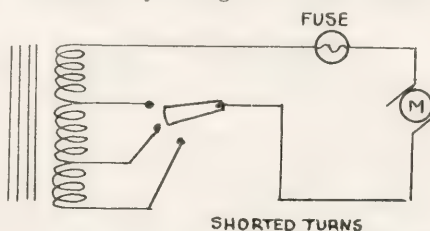


DIAGRAM SHOWING CONTACT BETWEEN TWO STUDS

(as in the author's case) I should not recommend any further increase in most cases, i.e., readers with 200 watt lamps or more. I don't say it cannot be done, but it usually involves re-winding the primary as well, to handle the current; and is best done as an auto-transformer, in order to get the winding in the space available. The iron must be fairly massive, too.

I always place a fuse in the primary of a transformer as well as in the secondary circuit, to protect the primary winding in

case of any shorting in the secondary which may cause an overload, but that is a matter of individual opinion.

Finally, I would point out that the transformers described in the article would seem to be of the 4 turn per volt variety, the odd three turns in the 4 volt winding being added for "regulation" purposes. This is a fairly low figure, and altering the transformation ratio by reducing primary turns adds still more strain on the already fully loaded primary circuit, besides carrying the increased secondary load; a higher magnetising current is required due to the reduced number of turns, and while this works well apparently in the case described, I would not like to say it would do so every time. L. A. BLUNDEN. Bitterne, Hants.

(Our correspondent is right in pointing to the risks of shorting some of the secondary turns by the stud switch controlling the motor speed, but a much simpler method of avoiding them is by using five studs instead of three, the second and fourth being without any connections.—EDITOR).

"THE MIRACLE"

I THOUGHT "The Miracle" one of the finest amateur theatrical films I had ever seen and am impatient of much of the criticism I heard about it at Film House. One of the complaints advanced was that the story was obscure and difficult to follow, yet curiously enough, those who made this objection seemed to understand the plot well enough. Perhaps they were thinking of its effect on those with minds less well-informed and refined than

(Continued on next page)



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Letters to the Editor

(Continued from previous page)

their own—a rather stupid form of snobbery.

In my view, to keep the audience guessing a little over a plot of this kind is not only desirable but necessary, for to present it with stark clarity, metaphorically dotting the i's and crossing the t's, is to reveal too nakedly its essential crudity. I am told heatedly that it is impossible to credit that the nun should have fallen from grace so soon. For my own part I was not conscious of the passage of time in the story: it could have been an hour or an age, for this is an allegory. If you are going to cavil over mundane matter-of-factness like this, you must also complain that a man cannot fight with himself, kill himself and yet remain; that once he is lying dead on the ground he cannot vanish into thin air. You must also deny that a painting can come to life.

"The Miracle" is that rarity among amateur films—a production made by people with imagination and intelligence for people with imagination and intelligence. It would appear from comments made that even among professedly knowledgeable amateurs these qualities are imperfectly developed. Hampstead.

WALTER MARGESSON.

8mm. SPLICING

FOR a very long time I have been dissatisfied with the method of splicing on 8mm. owing to the fact that even the best splicers that we could get were primarily designed for 16mm., and due to the great magnification splices were nearly always

visible on the screen. I played about with all sorts of different kinds of splicers and recently hit upon a satisfactory one.

I scrape away a complete frame. During projection, while the film is stationary in the gate (picture showing on screen), any surplus of cement is concealed behind the edges of the gate and when the film is moved on to the next frame the edges of the splice go through behind the blade of the shutter. On the screen these splices are quite invisible.



G. V. Lawrie's method of splicing 8mm. film (see letter).

At first, during the experimental stage, I made them slowly and laboriously by hand with a razor, but I have now had my Ensign Universal Splicer converted by a firm of opticians in Glasgow and so can make the new splices just as fast and as easily as the old kind. In hundreds of splices I have never had a breakage. I don't think the method would be practical for 16mm. so it is something that we 8mm. fans can have for ourselves!!

Bothwell.

G. V. LAWRIE.

IS THE PROFESSIONAL PLAYING FAIR?

AS a guest at the public presentation of the "Ten Best" may I thank you for an exceedingly entertaining and instructive evening, made even more enjoyable perhaps by the

actual presentation, for I noted a distinct improvement on previous years in projection and sound accompaniment.

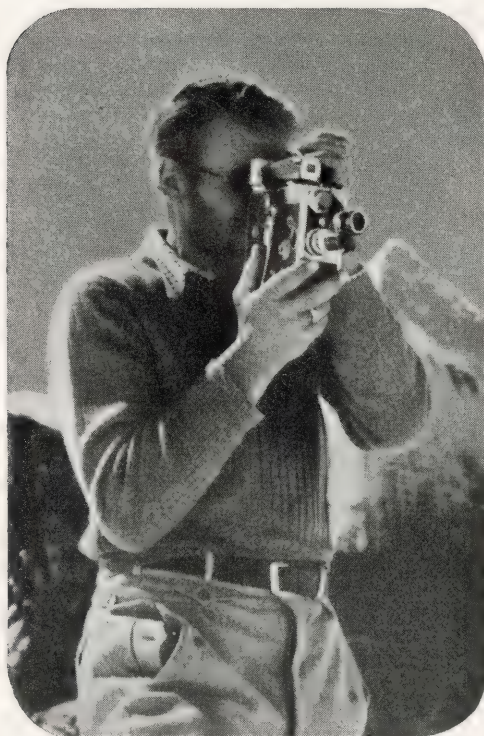
Mr. Andrew Buchanan, in his encouraging survey, assured us that we amateurs are, in our experiments, assisting the professionals. Judging by the increase in imaginative themes and treatment, many cinematographers are, but is the professional playing fair with the amateur? The professional does little to encourage the amateur. He cries out about unfair competition should we for a moment invade his market, even though we may provide a better film, and not undercut him financially. Outstanding amateur films are few and far between, and so cannot present any real opposition.

It seems to me that the time has come for more complete co-operation; that cinemas showing interest, foreign and other films appealing to the more serious type of cinema-goer, should be encouraged to follow the lead given by several other countries in installing substandard equipment, for even the most jealous professionals must admit that there are amateur films with far more entertainment or educational value than many of the productions they churn out. After all, the amateur is not out to rival the professional, but to make a good film; that streak of vanity in us, however, asks: "Why do not our good films receive the fullest appreciation?"

Why not a little more give and take here and there, so that films of the "Ten Best" standard may be seen by a far wider audience? Mr. Buchanan remarked that such a limited presentation was a pity—and he's a professional!

Tufnell Park, N.19. LEONARD F. MINTER.

A Climb of 23,426 feet Carried away in an Avalanche



In the Summer of 1939 four intrepid Swiss explorers set out from the foothills of the Himalayas in a gallant attempt to scale the unknown summits of the Garwhal range.

An indispensable part of their kit was a Model H.16 Paillard-Bolex Cine Camera. Although an instrument of the highest precision the Bolex came through an intensely trying ordeal with flying colours. Bumped and banged about; intense cold; blizzards; and even an avalanche. The official account says: "The caravan believed itself to be in security on a snow ridge, when suddenly at mid-day on Sept. 9th an enormous avalanche fell from more than 3,000 ft. above the camp, sweeping everything away, dragging the tents in a torrent of snow and ice to more than 1,300 ft. below."

"By a miracle the Europeans escaped—unfortunately two native porters lost their lives. The camera was found amongst the wreckage under blocks of ice and heaps of snow . . ."

and still the

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continued to work perfectly

"The film in the camera was completed, the whole scene of the disaster was shot, and when processed proved to be perfect."

Altogether more than 6,500 feet of film were taken on this expedition by Mr. André Roch, whose picture is shown here. He was delighted with the wonderful performance put up by the Model H.

Further proof of the robustness of the Paillard-Bolex comes from an amateur in tropical Africa who has used his instrument under very adverse tropical conditions—and is full of praise for its performance. Full particulars of the Paillard Bolex range and literature from

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What the SOCIETIES

Beckenham C.S.

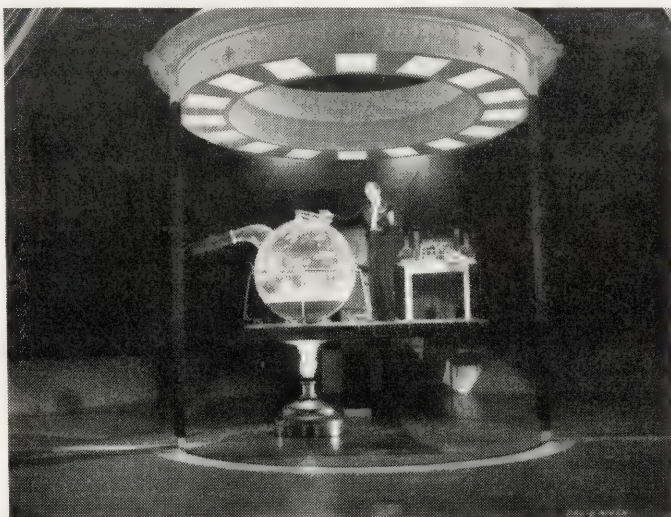
(Hon. Sec. : Miss M. Davies, 323, Upper Elmers End Road, Beckenham).

In Production : *Diamonds are Trumps*, directed by Mr. S. Davis. The first set for this production, a part of the interior of an air liner, has now been completed and shooting will be continued in the very near future. A rehearsal was held recently to assist the director to decide debatable points on certain actions before finally completing the shooting script.

The Society's cinema was completely redecorated ready for a film show arranged during the week April 29th to May 4th. The programme included two prize-winning films kindly loaned by Planet Film Society, *Refuge* and *Behold Our Leader*.

At the Annual General Meeting held on March 27th, it was decided to hold an extra meeting on the last Saturday of each month when the Society's premises will be open to all visitors and a special programme of films, both sound and silent, will be shown.

The Programme Secretary, Mr. W. Post, 190, Mackenzie Road, Beckenham, will be pleased to hear from any Society willing to loan films on a reciprocal basis.



A still from "Eternally Yours" showing the professionals' treatment of a scientific sequence. Compare this with the still from Planet A.F.S. film, "Thin Air," which was published last month.

British National F.S.

(Hon. Sec. : G. Hill, 184, Walton Road, Sale, Manchester).

The headquarters of this new society is now in operation. A film was started in March but, owing to the leading man being called up, it has had to be shelved. "We shot about 90 feet of film at the Belle Vue Zoological Gardens and the Speedway. It was here that we were taken for Nazi spies but after an explanation to the police and the Speedway officials we were allowed to proceed with our filming."

In production is a short farcical comedy starring the Stretford Rose Queen. About 70 feet has been shot, and it is hoped that the film will shortly be completed. It is called *Drat That Film* and will run to approximately 300 feet of 9.5mm. film. The co-operation of the Stretford Pageant Committee and the Northenden Rosemary Fund Committee has been secured for the filming of their pageants this year.

This society is trying to establish branches throughout Great Britain, and the secretary will supply further information to any interested persons.

Are Doing

Chalfont Productions A.C.S.

(Hon. Sec. : F. H. Matthews, 31, Chalfont Way, Ealing, W.13).

The society are well away in their second season, film in course of production being *Fools Men Are* (300 ft. ; 9.5mm). Story concerns two maiden ladies who come into money and decide to have a final fling. Their subsequent adventures after inserting an advert in the Matrimonial Times, which is answered by two shady characters, makes good fun. The society hopes to complete this by the end of the summer. The interior

sets of an old world cottage have been realistically made in the hall of a modern house.

The society is not open for membership.

Crouch End A.C.S.

(Hon. Sec. : S. D. Newman, 66, Crouch End Hill, Crouch End, N.8.)

Meetings are held once a week at the secretary's address, where at the moment the interior of a car is being built for a scene in a drama, *Holiday*, 9.5mm. Luckily, the leading actors still remain but many persons are needed to fill other parts in the script, and more technical members would be very welcome with or without apparatus. Other short documentary films are being planned.

(More Reports on next page)

Reports and Stills

for the July issue of "Amateur Cine World" should reach us not later than May 27th.

A handsome plaque will be awarded for the best Society film made this year and submitted to us for review. The plaque is so designed that it can be hung in the studio or theatre if desired.

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CLUB NOTES

(Continued from previous page)

Halifax C.C.

(Hon. Sec. : J. Corrigan, 8, Hill Top Avenue, Ainley Top, Huddersfield).

The Club's projection theatre and studio in Britannia Buildings, Central Street, Halifax, were officially opened on March 29th by Ald. A. H. Gledhill, J.P., who afterwards presented a cup to Mr. E. Marshal for his film, "Changing the Face of Halifax," which had been considered the best local film of the year. The evening concluded with a showing of members' films, presented in true professional style. The theatre, the work on which has been done by all who have seen it, and the projection room is outside the theatre itself.

During the past year the 9.5 section have made an interesting local news film and have in course of production a film on Halifax's A.R.P. activities. New members are welcome for any section and the possession of apparatus is not essential. Meetings are every Wednesday at 8 p.m. and a syllabus to cover the next six months' activities will be out shortly.

Lyric F.S.

(Hon. Sec. : V. Marcus Kirby, 5, Clarence Road, Windsor, Berks.).

The proposed gipsy film has, owing to technical difficulties, been shelved for the time being. Shooting, however, has been commenced on another story which is more ambitious and worthwhile than the former. It is provisionally titled *The Unknown Road*.

Mr. Gordon Harker, the famous stage and screen star, has kindly accepted the post of President of the club. The club still have several films for exchange and also several vacancies for new members. Would anyone interested in joining communicate with the Hon. Sec. ?

Oswestry C.S.

(Hon. Sec. : Ernest D. Power, Albion Hill, Oswestry).

During the winter activities were confined mainly to projection evenings—due to the cancellation of lecturers' visits—and most of the "tsar" amateur films were shown. Now the Society is very active on production. The following films have reached the editing and titling stage: (1) A film dealing with the activities of the local A.F.S., on 9.5mm. stock—the entire production (running to about 250 ft.) is being done by a lady member; (2) A *Busy Sunday*, a film of a tricky job by railway engineers of renewing a main-line bridge, which passed over another main-line, between dawn and dusk one Sunday, 200 ft., 8mm.; and (3) a comedy running to about 200 ft. on 8mm. on a back-to-the-land theme. No title has been chosen as yet.

The Club is anxious to contact other clubs with a view to exchanging programmes. The Vice-President, Stanley W. Bowler, A.R.P.S., gave a talk on "Trick Work with a Cine Camera" on April 22nd.

Planet A.F.S.

(Hon. Sec. : H. Roger Dale, 72, Wellington Road, Bush Hill Park, Enfield, Middx.).

In Production : *The Great Plague* (16mm. neg.-pos.). The finished script indicates that this new club production must run well over the original estimated length of one reel. An appreciable footage of film has already been exposed by members who spent weekends in various parts of the country gathering background shots of buildings of the period, but the cameraman has once or twice been almost reduced to tears when a favourite shot has been banned by the supervising historian—who is responsible for the authenticity of this film—because the paving was not quite right, a chimney pot or a tree showing, a window leadead in the wrong style or an iron drainpipe added to a building at a later date.

Interior sets have been planned from prints reproduced in reliable books, enough elaborate models constructed to build a whole street, costume sketches prepared, and many essential 'props,' carefully made to exact detail. In fact, during the writing of the script—which with the necessary research has taken more than two months to complete—many members have admitted learning far more about the seventeenth century than they ever did at school!

Between the completion of interior work for *Thin Air* and the commencement of *The Great Plague*, weekly meetings have been devoted to lectures and film shows. *Thin Air* is to be presented to club members at the studio on Sunday, May 26th.

Sale & Stretford F.S.

(Hon. Sec. : A. C. W. Ball, 53, Woodhouse Lane, Sale).

In Production : *Toni's Secret*, a one-reel farce on 9.5mm. Interiors are now being filmed.

The Annual General Meeting was held on April 1st, and the existing officials and committee were re-elected.

A programme of Lectures has been arranged for Monday evenings, Wednesdays will be for scene building and filming, and Sundays for Projection.

The filming of a Documentary is under discussion and it is hoped that a start will be made very shortly.

The Southall & District C.C.

(Hon. Sec. : H. Hurren, 82, Ranelagh Rd., Southall, Middx.).

The club is still making progress although some members are joining the forces. Many interesting meetings have been held, including a practical demonstration on the use of the Exposure Meter.

The club has made the portable proscenium illustrated in the January issue of *Amateur Cine World* and it has been greatly admired by all who have seen it.

Stoke-on-Trent A.C.S.

(Hon. Sec. : H. T. Morfey, 51, Beresford Crescent, Newcastle, Staffs.).

With one exception, club nights for the past month have been devoted to sound on disc experiments. The exception was a visit to the home of two of our members. Their set-up was the envy of all who accepted

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Several excellent films were shown, including an outstanding one with rock climbing and mountaineering as its subjects. Telephoto shots, in Kodachrome, of this hazardous hobby, equalled anything members had seen on the professional screen.

Watford A.C.C.

(Joint Hon. Sec.: D. Tilley, 233, Uxbridge Road, Rickmansworth).

To celebrate the club's first anniversary, a most successful projection evening was held on Thursday, April 4th, after a "rehearsal" to get everything running smoothly (attended by 30 members) had been held on the previous evening. The Mayor of Watford, Alderman L. H. Andrews, was present with the Lady Mayoress, together with Alderman H. Coates, his immediate predecessor. The fifty seats in the club's theatre were filled, and there were many standing.

Films shown included *Safer Beckenham*, kindly lent by the Beckenham C.S.; a silhouette cartoon *The Operation*; *Consider Your Verdict*, made by the defunct Brondesbury C.S., many of whose members now belong to the Watford A.C.C.; and a premiere of a 400 ft. 16mm. film made for A.F.S. recruiting purposes.

It is hoped to take advantage of the Mayor's offer to use the Town Hall for a projection meeting when the Club's current productions are ready, and possibly to have a projection week in aid of the Watford Hospital.

The policy of having two units in production has not been all that could be desired, tending rather to split the club into two sections, meeting alternate weeks. After these productions are finished (about Whitsun) it is proposed to embark on a single and rather more ambitious picture. It is also proposed to found a "stills" section. New members will be welcomed. The war-time subscription is only 2/6 per month.

Wimbledon C.C.

(Hon. Sec.: J. Symes, 28, West Side, Clapham Common, S.W.4).

At the annual competition for still photography held on March 30th, the Sugden Cup, which is awarded for the best print by public vote, went to Mr. R. Riggs. The runner-up was Mr. H. C. Bealby. The Watkins Cup was won by Mr. C. W. Watkins' "Portrait." The runner-up was Mr. Ralph Riggs.

The last Associate Members Meeting of the season was on April 13th and a large audience assembled to witness the premiere of the club's latest production *The Snob*. In addition to this film, the programme consisted of Ace Movies *Three Floors Up* and two other club films, *Me and My Dog* and *Wholly Smoke*. The meetings held since the outbreak of war have certainly been well attended and it is hoped that the enthusiasm which has been shown will be prevalent when they start again in the Autumn.

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Cartooning Made

Easier (Continued from page 93)

figures may be repeated many times and footage completed with greater ease. Following is a description of the procedure for a walking or running figure with a moving background.

Two holes are punched in a number of sheets of ordinary white drawing paper, and registration pegs arranged to receive them near the bottom edge of an illuminated panel, à la Disney. A series of sketches is then drawn of a side view of the figure performing the actions of moving forward two paces, but not actually moving sideways at all, i.e., the head remaining in practically the same position throughout. The last drawing, of course, will correspond with the first. These drawings are then numbered in order. The timing of the action, of course, is of primary consideration, but this, I am afraid, must be dealt with in a subsequent article. Suffice it to say that Pop-Eye the Sailor occupies about twenty frames in walking two steps!

These key drawings are then cut out carefully with scissors as in Fig. 1 and laid aside for the time being. The background, a moving one, will not be fixed on registration pins, but will slide in wooden grooves which are fixed temporarily to the horizontal title board, and will be held down flat by elastic bands as in Fig. 2. The background, which will move slowly at a uniform rate in the opposite direction to that of the figure, bears equally-spaced graduations along its top and bottom edges, each of which is brought up to a guide line on the title board for subsequent frames.

The "scenery" on the background is continuous; and care must be taken that it is left white below the level of the feet of the moving figure, otherwise it will be covered by the figure's "support." Experience shows, by the way, that this "support" is invisible on the screen if the titler is illuminated by two lamps, one on each side.

Now for the actual photography. Place the background in its first position on the board. Over it place No. 1 of the figure drawings. Switch on the lamps. Photograph the whole set-up—one or more frames, as the case may be. Slide the background along to the next mark. Replace figure No. 1 with No. 2 and photograph. Repeat until the last action figure is reached, and start again at No. 1.

Continue *ad infinitum* until the end of the background appears or until tired!

BRITISH SOUND RECORDING ASSOCIATION

A notice in Amateur Cine World some months ago concerning the work of the Association evoked a big response and so perhaps readers would like to know that although, under present conditions, certain activities have been curtailed, contact with the membership is being maintained through publications. The Information Bureau is still open to handle members' technical queries on all aspects of sound recording.

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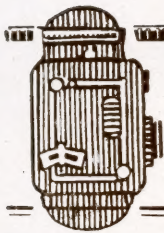
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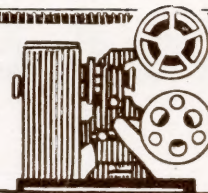
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